



## SPORTS/A29

**Vitoria keeps WBC light fly title**

## NEWS/A4

**Edsa docu: Gringo didn't have People Power in mind**

## BUSINESS/B1

**HSBC's fearless forecast: P47.50 to \$1**

## ENTERTAINMENT/A2-8

**Funny 'Mega Valentine'**

**Amsterdam hookers hold red light district 'open house'**



AMSTERDAM'S FAMED red light district held its first ever "open day" on Saturday as its peep shows and brothels gave crowds of wide-eyed visitors free entry to help shed the area's increasingly negative reputation. Armed with a list of 25 AMSTERDAM/A29

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEW

Monday, February 20, 2006

★★

5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 74

P18

web

FORWARDED text message from the rubble: "Ma'am, we are still under the school. Please help us, ma'am. This is Edilio Coquilla. Please ma'am." EDWIN BACASAS

# Faint sign of life in buried school

Rescuers hear scratching, raise hopes for over 200 pupils

By Volt Contreras, Vicente Labro and Jani Arnaiz  
PDI Visayas Bureau

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN Leyte—Rescuers racing against time said yesterday they heard "scratches" indicating signs of life apparently coming from a schoolhouse buried in a landslide with over 200 children and teachers inside it.

The Guinsaugon Elementary School (GES) in this town had been the emotional focus of search and rescue operations after a deadly avalanche of mud and rocks swamped Barangay Guinsaugon and buried close to 2,000 people. Many of the villagers were feared killed.

"It went on for more than a minute. It was like a sheet of metal being scratched," mountaineer Lt. Rtd Esguerra, a member of the Philippine Coast Guard medi-

FAINT SIGN/A22



THE LONG ANXIOUS WAIT for word on the missing is what is killing these survivors of the landslide as they stand behind the rope while rescuers do the arduous work of finding survivors and recovering the dead. So far rescuers have found no survivors. ROGER HANGALLO

## Officials warn of more disasters

By Luige A. del Puerto

UNLESS AN EARLY WARNING system is set up to advise people living in flood- and landslide-prone areas, a disaster similar to what took place in St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte could hit the country's eastern seaboard again, the defense department warned yesterday.

"Over the next four months, there is the danger that this flooding and landslide will happen again — These flood-prone and landslide-prone areas could be hit," Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said.

The eastern seaboard refers to provinces that lie near the Philippine Sea and Pacific Ocean. They include Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino, Aurora, Quezon, the Bicol provinces, Samar and Leyte islands, Surigao and Agusan provinces and Davao Oriental.

Once La Niña comes, these areas would be the hardest hit, according to Dr. Graciano Yumul, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astro-

OFFICIALS/A20



EDSA I

20

**S**TARTING TODAY, WE BEGIN OUR SERIES ON EDSA I IN CELEBRATION of the 20th anniversary of those four days in February 1986 when we Filipinos revolted on a stretch of highway, and right there and then ousted the Marcos dictatorship without a single shot being fired, without a drop of blood being shed. We simply stunned the world, and inspired revolutions, Filipino style, in all nations still yearning to be free.

All credit goes to the Filipino people. Which is why we had asked them to write in their own personal stories of EDSA I, big and small, untold and retold (See below), because EDSA I, also known as the "real and only" EDSA, truly belongs to the Filipinos. Which is why it is also called the People Power Revolt.

It is also called a miracle. As if it were not miracle enough that the Filipinos after 14 years of strongman rule suddenly found their voice and the guts to regain their freedom. But they would be the first to shout it from the rooftops of the

world that they did not do it alone. For, you see, in this Christian country, all the saints came marching in, too, led by the Blessed Virgin Mother borne on the shoulders of her flock.

To get an idea of the big picture, we also present what was happening on the other side of the Pasig River—Malacañang Palace—written by eyewitnesses to the last days of the crumbling Marcos empire. And the historic portrait would not be complete without a glimpse of the military's critical role in the downfall of Marcos. Except that it was probably the first time that "the protector of the people" was in fact being protected and saved by the warm bodies of the people at EDSA.

The series is dedicated to the 20somethings (about 52 million of you guys out there) who have no memory of our gloriously recent past. This memory is a moveable feast. Carry it with you wherever you go as a badge of honor and pride of being Filipino. **LJM**

## THE PEOPLE

### Rage with a heart

By Benjamin Vallejo Jr.

(The writer is assistant professor in the UP College of Science.)

**T**HE EARLY AND MID 1980S WERE SIGNIFICANT for many of us, what fellow congener Jessica Zafra called the Voltes V generation. Those times coincided with our entry to adulthood and political maturity and the phenomenal rise of Japanese Anime.

In 1983, we were junior high school students who were on a field trip for our mythology class. On this rather uneventful Aug. 21, we heard on the way back to Manila that Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino had been shot!

Six years before, as grade three kids, my Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) teacher asked us if Aquino was a bad man. The class responded "yes." This was at the height of martial law. And our teacher said, "Oh my poor martial law babies."

But on that August day, we knew who Aquino was, but were quite hazy on the freedom he was going to lay down his life for.

RAGE/A25

## THE MILITARY

### 'I chose to be there'

By Angelo T. Reyes

(The writer is now DENR secretary.)

**I** WAS A FULL COLONEL IN THE ARMED Forces assigned as a senior military assistant to Prime Minister Cesar Virata on Feb. 22, 1986.

Right there and then, I knew I had to make a personal decision whether to join the rebel forces or to align myself in defense of an administration that had lost the moral ascendancy to govern after stealing the results of the 1986 election.

As senior vice president of the AFP-RSBS (Retirement, Separation Benefits System) at the time, I was not in command of any combat unit then. Thus, I knew that whatever I chose to do would not in any way decide the outcome of the very tense standoff and the fate of the Filipino nation.

Oh how wrong I was to think that way! Mistaken because if every single person who went to EDSA thought of how inconsequential one man's contribution could be, then there would not have been a throng of people in and around Camp Crame and

I CHOSE/A25

## THE PALACE

### Where's makeup artist?

By Fernando del Mundo

**N**O SHOT HAD YET BEEN FIRED, BUT when Hermie Rivera faced the wrong end of an assault rifle in the Palace corridor he thought he would be the first casualty of the 1986 People Power revolution.

Rivera's confrontation with the Galil-wielding son of President Ferdinand Marcos followed his father's decision to go on national television to reassure the world he would not attack the rebels.

A trusted press officer with full access to the inner Palace sanctum, Rivera had arranged for Marcos' television address hours after Washington had warned of dire consequences if the President mounted an offensive.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr., nicknamed Bongbong, had opposed his father's decision taken on the second day of the breakaway by rebellious Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos, the Armed Forces deputy chief of staff.

WHERE'S/A20



## WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: N. and E. Luzon will have cloudy skies with scattered rains. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Frequent rains over S. Mindanao may cause flashfloods and landslides. The rest will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY CYRIL DOMANUELO, PDR/SEARCH/02/20/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

## Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: [inquirer.news@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:inquirer.news@inquirer.com.ph) or 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Manila	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Los Baños	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Clark	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Davao	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy

## Bomb found at PMA after rites

By Vincent Cabreza  
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE MILITARY IS INVESTIGATING the reported discovery of a bomb at the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday night amid fresh rumors of a destabilization plot against the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The explosive device, loaded with about 2 kg of TNT, was found by members of PMA's military police unit hidden in a clutch bag at the PMA grandstand, hours after the academy held its alumni homecoming.

President Arroyo, who was said to be the target of a protest at the academy, skipped the gather-

ing after the fresh coup plot was revealed. She sent her daughter Luli to the annual reunion instead.

A PMA official said the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) had started investigating how the bag containing the TNT could have been left at the grandstand.

The explosive was turned over to Isafp agents here by PMA officials, said the official, who asked not to be identified.

Reports about the bomb circulated around Baguio at 10 p.m. Saturday but PMA officials denied a bomb had been found on the academy's premises.

Lt. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, scored the report that was initially released by Reuters.

"Mali, mali ang mga reports (Those are all wrong reports)," he said in a telephone interview on Sunday.

"We have no knowledge of any [bomb] found at the grandstand," said Col. Ricardo Nepomuceno, PMA spokesperson.

The homecoming, which was attended by more than 1,300 alumni and their families, drew attention last week after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez revealed that the reunion would be the springboard for a new coup attempt.

Gonzalez based his information on a document called "Oplan Hackle" that was supposedly recovered from the locker of an Oakwood mutineer.

The military and police top brass and government officials attended the homecoming.

Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, Baguio police director, said they were not informed about the supposed discovery of the bomb.

"If the report is true, the PMA

also has its own explosives disposal unit, so it can best determine whether [the explosives] were meant to be [used for a terrorist attack]," he said.

Nerez, a member of PMA "Maharlika" Class 1984, was instructed to secure the academy during the reunion on Saturday.

On March 18, 1987, a bomb which could have been intended for then President Corason Aquino, who was to grace that year's graduation rites, exploded at the PMA grandstand, killing four and injuring 47 others.

PMA officials and alumni had described the bombing as a desecration of Borromeo Field, where alumni homecoming parades are traditionally held.

Earlier this week, Reuters, quoting two senior generals, reported details of a plot to unseat and possibly assassinate Ms Arroyo.

The plan involved the mass escape of mutineers originally set for January, hostage-taking at the weekend gathering of military commanders at the PMA, the occupation of military camps and the removal Ms Arroyo from office.

Talk of a plot by some elements of the military has been spreading since the escape from an army camp in January of four leaders of the Magdalo group of mutineers who staged a one-day mutiny in Makati City in July 2003.

With Reuters

## Elite PNP unit denies hand in plot Ermita, Bunye

By Luigi A. del Puerto

THE CHIEF OF AN ELITE COMBAT unit of the Philippine National Police yesterday vowed to thwart any moves to destabilize the Arroyo administration even as he denied rumors that his men were involved in any such plots.

The PNP-Special Action Force "will thwart any action by any group that poses a threat to the state and to disrupt the normal activities and functions of government," SAF Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco Jr. warned.

The SAF is the most seasoned fighting unit of the police. Last year, it stormed a jail in Bicutan, Taguig City, when Abu Sayyaf detainees seized control of the facility in a botched attempt to escape. More than 22 detainees were killed in the ensuing firefight.

"In my humble capacity as director of the PNP-SAF, once and for all in order to allay the apprehensions of the public, I categorically deny any involvement of my unit in any unlawful or unauthorized action outside of the chain of command," Franco said.

"The PNP-SAF is a professional police unit. We will never engage in any action beyond our mandate to enforce the law, to maintain peace and order, and to defend the republic against enemies of the state," he said.

Early this year, an intelligence officer disclosed that people seeking to destabilize the government had approached several police commanders, including at least one officer of the PNP-SAF, to lure them into breaking the chain of command.

But they were rebuffed by the commanders, the intelligence officer said.

Franco said his men were all accounted for.

"All SAF units are under the effective control of responsible and trustworthy officers with proven integrity and unquestionable loyalty," he said, adding that the PNP-SAF's "solidarity as a fighting unit is indivisible."

According to Franco, SAF had fought countless battles in the fiercest campaigns against groups making a mockery of the country's laws, including those seeking to wrest control of the government.

## to face senators today over budgets

By TJ Burgonio

BARRING ANY HITCHES, EXECUTIVE Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye will appear at today's Senate hearing on the P1,053-trillion 2006 budget, to the delight of some senators.

Ermita and Bunye had confirmed their attendance at the Senate committee of the whole hearing on the budgets of the Office of the President and the Office of the Press Secretary, a committee staff member said.

"It augurs well for our constitutional democracy and for our nation," Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

"It's good for our work. We can continue doing our inquiry. We'll be able to question these officials on how they disposed of the money allocated to them in the previous year," Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in an interview.

The attendance of the two Cabinet members comes a week after fresh hostilities erupted between Malacañang and the Senate over Executive Order No. 464, with senators asking the Supreme Court to stop President Macapagal-Arroyo from enforcing the order.

The latest row was triggered by the nonappearance of Bunye and officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government at

the Senate budget hearing on Feb. 8. The officials had invoked EO 464.

The order bars administration, police and military officials from appearing in congressional hearings without the President's approval. It has been a major flashpoint for confrontation between the two branches of government since September.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, for his part, said he would question Ermita and other government officials on why they allowed the National Power Corp. to pay its officers and employees some P12 billion in separation pay in 2005 and then rehired them.

"Why did they not question it?" he said in an interview.

Pimentel, however, said the appearance of Ms Arroyo's top Cabinet men at the budget hearings "was not good enough," insisting that she revoke EO 464.

"While Gloria appears to be loosening up, she might tighten up next time around. So we can't say 'all's well that ends well,'" he said. "Unless she repeals EO 464, it will be far from saying that we're doing things according to the Constitution."

Pangilinan said the Cabinet men's presence at the hearing would not in any way affect the urgent motion filed by 17 senators on Feb. 10 asking the high tribunal to resolve their application for a TRO against EO 464.

## After Garci, House set to probe gov't agencies

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER ITS CELEBRATED BUT fruitless "Hello Garci" wiretapping inquiry, the House of Representatives is bucking down to work, preparing to investigate underperforming government agencies.

The House oversight committee has set its sights on the financial state of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) which had incurred heavy losses, defeating its mandate to provide financial assistance to distressed banks, according to House Majority Leader Prospero C. Nograles.

The Davao lawmaker said yesterday the oversight committee chair, Rep. Danilo Suarez, had scheduled the inquiry for next week.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. also asked the House committee on good government to investigate the Department of Budget and Management's role in bidding out government procurement contracts from textbooks and Armed Forces supplies to hospital equipment by virtue of a Marcos-era directive.

Pichay said the joint congressional committee on the Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act No. 9184) should check whether the setup was one contemplated by the act, which mandates the "procuring agency" to conduct the bidding and issue of the notice of award through its Bids and Awards Committee.

The DBM, which releases the funds, cannot influence the choice of the winning bidder, lest it be accused of conflict of interest, according to Pichay.

On the PDIC's financial mess, Nograles said the oversight committee also wanted to find out if the agency should be abolished.

"Is the PDIC performing its functions well or has it become a liability to the government?" he said.

Nograles endorsed the resolution filed by Rep. Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas urging Congress to look into the current financial status of the PDIC.

As a rule, PDIC sources the funds it leads to problematic banks by borrowing from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The Mandanas resolution cited a Commission on Audit report in December 2004 that said loans extended by the BSP to PDIC amounted to P80.724 billion (almost two-thirds of the BSP's outstanding loan portfolio of P124.48 billion), which represents 94 percent of the outstanding liabilities of PDIC.

In the same report, Nograles noted that the BSP was losing P1.2 billion yearly as a result of unprofitable loans to the PDIC in the bailout of problematic banks.

"I'm urging an immediate investigation of the PDIC's management of funds and why BSP has too much financial exposure in PDIC," he said.

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# Cha-cha backers risk people's ire – solons

By TJ Burgoon

GOVERNMENT LEADERS BENT ON CONVENING Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution without the Senate were courting the "wrath of the people," Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan warned yesterday.

Pangilinan advised Charter change proponents to think "long and hard" before pushing ahead with the "disputable move" to amend the 1987 Constitution "employing patently illegal means."

The senator said the proponents of Cha-cha were "dead wrong" to think that Filipinos were "so dumb as to meekly swallow this latest arrogance and tasteless maneuver."

"They are courting the wrath of a people tired of decades of self-serving political maneuvers by *trapos* (traditional politicians). They are testing to the limits the people's patience on this one and the people's response may come as a shock to these arrogant power-wielders," he said.

Pangilinan was reacting to disclosures by Incoming Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno

that the pro-administration Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) party had so far gathered 110 signatures of lawmakers to get Congress to convene itself into a constituent assembly.

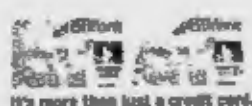
Speaker Jose de Venecia launched last week a campaign to gather 195 signatures of "all members of Congress," voting jointly, to constitute the Senate and the House into a constituent assembly to change the Charter.

He said the constitutional provision authorizing the revision of the Constitution by a three-fourths vote of all members of Congress was "very clear, there's no room for ambiguity."

The Senate said that only a majority of both chambers, voting separately, could convert Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Charter.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said there was no need for senators to challenge the De Venecia-led initiative, once it was completed, before the Supreme Court.

"Let them gather 1 million signatures until they're blue, it will not amount to anything. Nothing plus nothing equals nothing," he said.



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## NOT FUNNY

Hundreds of Muslims held a torch rally on Saturday at Maharlika Village in Taguig City to protest the satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that were published by a Danish newspaper last year. Last week, Muslims held a protest on Ayala Avenue in front of the Danish Embassy in Makati over the cartoons that have earned the ire of followers of Islam worldwide.

RAFFY LERMA

## Piracy worth P1.3B

THE COUNTRY'S ANTI-piracy agency said yesterday it would step up the drive against copyright violators as an industry study showed that reduced software piracy alone could raise up to P1.3 billion in taxes for the government and generate more than 2,000 new jobs.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., director general of the Intellectual Property Office, said the recent decision by the United States to remove the Philippines from its priority watch list was recognition of the government's efforts to protect intellectual property rights.

Still, the Office of the US Trade Representative said the Philippines needed to take stronger measures to stay off the list of countries considered notorious for bootlegging computer software, movies, music, books and apparel.

Cristobal said his office would undertake measures to ensure that gains made in protecting intellectual property rights would translate to economic and social benefits.

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Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.

treatments. As another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres, would attest: "I'm an avid golfer so I'm very much exposed to the sun. That's how I had freckles. And I've tried every whitening product you can possibly think of: whitening cream, whitening lotion, sunblock, scrub, I even bought this thing from Hong Kong that you're supposed to drink to lighten your skin...nothing! It lightens up your skin for a while but you can't expose yourself to the sun anymore. And for avid players



Another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres.

like me, that's totally unthinkable! So when I tried IPL, I was really impressed. Just after the first treatment, there were already visible,

dramatic results! IPL is really the only treatment that worked for me."

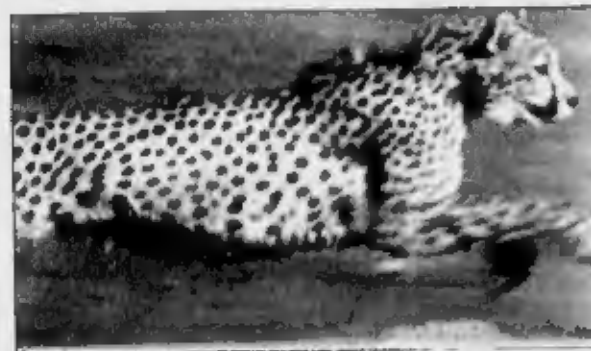
Like Dr. Torres and Janet Ley, many satisfied clients have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles, and other skin discoloration. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day, as if nothing happened at all!

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Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya with the IPL machine.

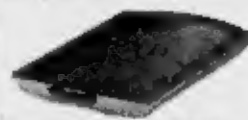


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## BOC works to fix image

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS WILL SOON FILE 32 cases against suspected smugglers in a bid to prove its commitment to battling illegal activities, Commissioner Napoleon Morales has said.

Morales disclosed the move in a recent meeting with the American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Amcham) where he vowed to enhance the integrity of the bureau, according to a statement.

"We need your help as the BOC can only succeed with close coordination and cooperation with the private sector, especially the foreign businessmen, in the country," Morales told Amcham.

He said the BOC would be signing a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General to facilitate the prosecution of cases against suspected smugglers.

Reynaldo Umali, BOC legal service director, said in a separate statement the bureau would be increasing its pool of lawyers to handle the cases to be filed under the Run After The Smugglers (RATS) program initiated by the Department of Finance.

The BOC is also expected to come out soon with the results of its investigation into the illegal activities of its own personnel.

Morales ordered the probe and the updating of the list of suspected smugglers after being criticized in a Senate hearing for the proliferation of smuggling. The names of several suspected smugglers were revealed at the hearing and Morales vowed to have them investigated.

Leila B. Salaverria

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## 'RP could lure 30% of call center seats'

IF FACTORIES OF THE PAST could be relocated, so can "the factories of the 21st century"—call centers.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines said the Philippines could corner as many as 450,000 call center jobs from the "offshoring" operations of large United States corporations over the next five years.

US firms are under enormous pressure to cut costs and boost shareholder returns and may eventually decide to offshore or outsource up to 1.5 million US-based call center seats that are now being staffed by Americans, said TUCP general secretary Ernesto Herrera.

"Our projection is that US firms will find ways to offshore to low-wage English-speaking countries about 50 percent, or 1.5 million, of all call center seats now based in the US," Herrera, a former senator, said.

He said that with the Westernized culture of college-educated Filipinos, "we should get 30 percent of the seats."

The US has at present more than three million call center

seats, most of them in-house, supporting the operations of large companies that routinely deal with millions of customers.

About six million Americans staff the work stations, making sales calls, taking orders or fielding questions from customers. These workers range from telemarketers and catalog order takers to technical support agents for mobile telephone and computer users.

Herrera said US companies were paying their American workers from \$7 to \$14 per hour in wages, or six to 12 times the P15,000 per month that they would be paying Filipino call center agents.

"They can definitely save tons of money by resettling their call center activities in the Philippines, either through more cost-effective independent specialized contractors or by putting up in-house facilities here," he said.

A recent Columbia University survey indicated that after India, the Philippines has been the "second largest recipient of outsourcing, capturing almost 30 percent of the market." Jerome Aning

## Kidney center beats odds, marks 23rd anniversary

THE NATIONAL KIDNEY AND Transplant Institute (NKTi) is celebrating its 23rd anniversary on Feb. 23 still true to its mission "to work hand in hand with government in the achievement of good health for the Filipino people by providing specialized medical services."

Founded in 1983 as the National Kidney Foundation of the Philippines, NKTi had just 50 beds for patients needing medical and surgical care. From there the foundation worked to become the forerunner of transplant centers in the country.

The NKTi story, however, is not without its twists and turns.

In 1998 fire gutted the nearby Lung Center of the Philippines affecting some operations of NKTi. At the same time, the kidney institute's buildings had deteriorated, equipment had broken down or become obsolete, pharmaceutical supplies had to be purchased from outside.

Like any public facility, NKTi depended greatly on meager government subsidies. But its staff persevered and its newly appointed executive director then, Dr. Enrique T. Ona, would not be deterred.

Ona began by rehabilitating the patients' rooms and building more to accommodate their growing number.

The Center for Special Services composed of the urology, endoscopy and chemotherapy, transfusion and pain manage-

ment units, physical medicine and rehabilitation, prostate health clinic and vascular laboratory, wound and ostomy care clinic were established to cater to patients with special needs.

Up-to-date medical equipment were acquired like a spiral CT-scan, millennium VG gamma camera and open magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ablation, extra corporeal shock wave lithotripsy, flow cytometry and fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) machines.

The NKTi provided continuing education for its doctors through extensive training programs in the various specialties. To continually upgrade the skills of its nurses and other paramedical staff, NKTi established the Institute of Advanced Nursing and Allied Health Professions.

Today, with its three-story edifice and two annexes that can accommodate 266 inpatients, its state-of-the-art equipment, services and expertise in providing quality medical care, NKTi has maintained its standing as the country's premier institution for kidney diseases and organ transplantation.

It is the first government hospital to be ISO 9001:2000 certified.

On Feb. 23, another building will be blessed, the Gourmet Express (New NKTi Café). Coinciding with this is the launch of the NKTi anniversary coffee table book, "NKTi@20, A Dynamic Pulse."



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## THE DAILY GOSPEL



Monday, February 20, 2006  
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:  
Gospel:

Jas 3:13-18  
Mark 9:14-29

When Jesus came to the place where they had left the disciples, they saw many people around and some teachers of the Law arguing with them. When the people saw Jesus, they were astonished and ran to greet him.

He asked, "What are you arguing about with them?" A man answered him from the crowd, "Master, I brought my son to you for he has a dumb spirit. Whenever the spirit seizes him, it throws him down and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not."

Jesus replied, "You faithless people. How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it shook and convulsed the boy who fell on the ground and began rolling about, foaming at the mouth. Then Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He replied, "From childhood. And it has often thrown him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Jesus said to him, "Why do you say: 'If you can'? All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe, but help the little faith I have."

Jesus saw that the crowd was increasing rapidly, so he ordered the evil spirit, "Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you: Leave the boy and never enter him again." The evil spirit shook and convulsed the boy and with a terrible shriek came out. The boy lay like a corpse and people said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him and the boy stood up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive out the spirit?" And he answered, "Only prayer can drive out this kind, nothing else."

## Commentary

Wisdom is given to us from above—easy to recognize for it is peaceable, lenient, docile, rich in sympathy and just deeds, impartial and sincere. There is a harvest of justice sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. The disciples are having trouble without the wisdom of Jesus. They seek to heal and help and cannot make a dent in evil, illness, the trials of others. Jesus' presence commands the mute and deaf spirit of the child to leave, and it obeys. And Jesus chastises us, saying some things can only be driven out by prayer. Do we pray with Jesus before the Father in the power of the Spirit, in peace, rich in mercy, sincerely, doing justice? Prayer begins with words and ends in works.

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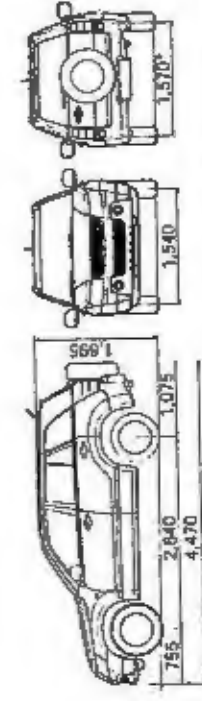


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# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

## 16 killed in cartoons riot in Nigeria

KANO, NIGERIA—RIOTING IN NIGERIA LEFT AT least 16 people dead Saturday after Muslim protests against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad descended into violence, a police spokesperson said.

Witnesses said that protesters turned on the Christian minority in the northern city of Maiduguri, burning shops and churches, after police dispersed a rally called

to condemn European newspapers that printed the caricatures.

Nigeria's police spokesperson, Deputy Commissioner Haz Iwendu, said that Army troops and po-

lice reinforcements had been deployed to the city and that a curfew had been imposed to bring about a return to order.

"We've arrested 115 people. Some 15 persons were killed by rioters, and 11 churches burnt," he said.

Another rioter died in a similar protest in the city of Katsina which also turned ugly. The rioter was shot dead by police as marchers pelted officers with stones.

"Two police were injured, and we arrested 105 persons. Normalcy has been restored," Iwendu said.

Saturday's deaths were the first linked to the cartoons, as anger mounted among Nigeria's 60 million Muslims, roughly half the population.

Mohammed Auwal, a civil servant in Maiduguri, said: "When the protesters gathered for the protest at Ramat square they were ordered by a police detachment to disperse."

"The policemen then fired canisters of teargas to disperse the crowd."

"When news went into town about what happened at the square, a mob attacked motor spare parts shops of Christian Igbo traders at Monday market in the city, looting and burning them," Auwal said.

A local reporter, Abdullahi Bego, said that at least 20 shops had been looted and churches had been burned to the ground.

"There are a lot of anti-riot police squad all over the city and their presence has helped quell the rampage," Bego said.

In recent weeks there have been protests around the world—some peaceful, some violent—by Muslims angry over the publication in European newspapers of cartoons satirizing Islam's holiest figure, the Prophet Muhammad.

From Katsina, a witness said the crowd had only turned violent after a meeting about the cartoons turned to politics and fears that President Olusegun Obasanjo may change the constitution to allow him to stand for a third term.

Civil servant Ibrahim Salihu said: "Initially the preaching centered on the cartoons, but later the issue of the third term emerged."

"After the preaching the group decided to take its protest to government house. Their way was blocked and police fired teargas. People started throwing stones, then the police fired into the crowd," he said.

A local reporter in Katsina said he had seen three people hospitalized with gunshot wounds following the fighting.

In Abuja, Information Minister Frank Nweke called on religious leaders to rein in their angry followers.

AFP

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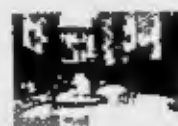
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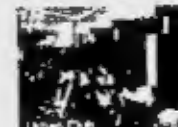
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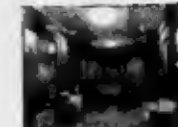
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# Bird flu for first time hits France, India, Iran

PARIS—THE H5N1 BIRD FLU VIRUS was identified Saturday for the first time in France, Iran and India, and claimed another victim in Indonesia, though Nigeria said it was bringing the disease under control.

The French government said all containment measures were already in place as it announced that tests on a wild duck found dead in the central-eastern Ain department confirmed the presence of the highly pathogenic strain of the virus.

Six member states of the European Union have now confirmed the presence of the potentially lethal strain of the virus to humans, which is spreading across the continent after showing up in Turkey and central Europe.

Fears about the first H5N1 outbreak in France, Europe's largest poultry producer, led the government to take preventive steps Friday and order all poultry and tame birds to be kept indoors, and all farm ducks and geese to be vaccinated in

three departments on the Atlantic coast.

In India, state government officials said that a laboratory had confirmed the country's first outbreak of the virus in chickens after 50,000 birds died.

With concerns about the world's poultry stock, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said avian influenza is not transmitted through properly cooked poultry or poultry products, as the H5N1 virus is heat-sensitive.

Meanwhile, Iran said that 135 wild swans found dead at the Caspian Sea coast have tested positive for H5N1, the first cases of the virus to be confirmed in the Islamic republic.

Indonesia confirmed its 19th death from bird flu, a 23-year-old man who worked for a chicken vendor, as the health minister vowed to boost stockpiles of the Tamiflu anti-viral drug.

The world's fourth most populous nation has now reported eight fatalities from H5N1 this year alone, the highest figure globally. The virus has claimed some 90

lives, mostly in Asia, since late 2003.

The virus is spreading in Austria, affecting a swan in the capital Vienna and a duck in a neighboring village, officials said Saturday.

At the same time it has been detected in 28 more dead birds on a German island where 13 were found earlier this week, the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania's agriculture minister, Till Backhaus, said.

German Agriculture Minister Horst Seehofer warned on Friday that about 80 birds in all had been tested for avian influenza and more positive results could be expected.

Officials in Nigeria said Saturday that its bird flu crisis was slowly coming under control, 11 days after Africa's first outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

"The situation is under control ... if there are new challenges we are up to it," Nigeria's chief veterinary officer Junaido Maina told AFP.

"Under the emergency preparedness plan, we have 70 investigative and diagnostic teams to go out, get and test samples from all over the country as soon as there are a high number of deaths," he said.

Bird flu had been confirmed in three northern states but there have been several suspected outbreaks in other states.

Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif on Saturday urged Egyptians to put an end to the use of rooftop farmyards, identified as a major health hazard since the first outbreak of avian influenza was confirmed. Four out of six birds found to have been infected by the deadly H5N1 strain in Cairo came from such installations.

Italy is prepared to breach European Union rules on state aid to agriculture in order to boost poultry farmers suffering from consumer fears over bird flu, Italian media quoted Agriculture Minister Gianni Alemanno as saying Saturday. AFP



H5N1 being vaccinated in India.



PAKISTANI Muslim activists shout anti-European slogans during a demonstration in Peshawar, Feb. 18, against publication of the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

## Danish editor: Cartoons printed in response to self-censorship

WASHINGTON—THE DANISH EDITOR IN charge of publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad says they were printed in response to self-censorship on issues regarding Islam and that giving in to pressure not to run them would have been "incompatible with a secular democracy."

In an opinion article written for Sunday editions of the Washington Post, Flemming Rose, the editor at the Jyllands-Posten newspaper behind the publication of the caricatures, said running the cartoons was responding to "widening fears and feelings of intimidation in dealing with issues related to Islam."

Citing a Danish children's writer not being able to find an illustrator for a book about Muhammad and the Tate gallery in London withdrawing an installation that depicted a Koran, Bible and Talmud torn to pieces, Rose said his newspaper saw "a legitimate news story to cover, and Jyllands-Posten decided to do it by adopting the well-known journalistic principle: Show, don't tell."

The cartoons, first printed in September, have set off violent protests around the world in which at least 45 people have died. Other Western newspapers, mostly in Europe, have reprinted the pictures, asserting their news value and the right to freedom of expression.

Islam widely holds that representations of Muhammad are banned for fear they could lead to idolatry.

Rose—who is on indefinite holiday from his newspaper—wrote that the cartoons were fair in their treatment of Islam.

"The cartoonists treated Islam the same way they treat Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions. And by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers. The cartoons are including, rather than excluding, Muslims," Rose wrote.

One of the more notorious of the cartoons published features the prophet with a bomb in his turban.

"Angry voices claim the cartoon is saying that the prophet is a terrorist or that every Muslim is a terrorist," Rose wrote. "I read it differently: Some individuals have taken the religion of Islam hostage by committing terrorist acts in the name of the prophet. They are the ones who have given the religion a bad name."

After reports that the Danish newspaper refused to run caricatures of Jesus in the past, critics said that pointed to a double standard when it comes to dealing with Islam. But Rose defended his newspaper's editorial decisions, saying depictions of Jesus have been printed.

"Jyllands-Posten has refused to print satirical cartoons of Jesus, but not because it applies a double standard. In fact, the same cartoonist who drew the image of Muhammad with a bomb in his turban drew a cartoon with Jesus on the cross having dollar notes in his eyes and another with the star of David attached to a bomb fuse. There were, however, no embassy burnings or death threats when we published those." AP

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## Buyer draws \$365-M lottery jackpot ticket

**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**—AT LEAST ONE person bought a winning ticket for Saturday's record \$365 million Powerball lottery jackpot, officials said.

A winning ticket was sold Lincoln, Nebraska, the Nebraska Lottery reported. It was not known late Saturday whether other winning tickets were sold in other states.

The chances of winning the jackpot by matching all six numbers were 1 in 146.1 million. The win-

ning numbers drawn Saturday night were 15-17-43-44-48 and Powerball 29.

People with dreams of winning a record \$365 million Powerball lottery jackpot stood in lengthening lines to buy tickets that flew out of

**machines at dizzying speeds.**

"I figure somebody is going to win it, so it might as well be me," said Casey Symonds after buying \$25 worth of tickets for himself and four co-workers Friday in Nebraska.

The Powerball jackpot topped the previous lottery record, which was

\$363 million for the

**Big Game**—the forerunner of Mega Millions. That was won by two ticket holders in Illinois and Michigan in 2000.

Powerball's previous record of \$340 million was won by an Oregon family in October. **AJ**

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# 1M fans 'satisfied' with Stones concert

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil—Veteran rock group the Rolling Stones created 1 million delirious fans to a rock 'n' roll spectacle with a free show on Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana Beach on Saturday night in what was one of the biggest rock concerts ever.

Singer Mick Jagger, 62, danced around the stage like a skinny teenager for the two-hour show, which featured songs from their early days in London 40 years ago and from their latest Grammy-winning album "A Bigger Bang."

Police deployed more than 6,000 officers throughout Rio, one of the most beautiful but violent cities in the world.

Officials had been worried about widespread thefts or trouble with the drug gangs that rule the shantytowns, or favelas.

"Nothing serious happened, thanks to God. It was calm," police Col. Leonardo Tavares said.

A fire department official said about 250 people were treated for exhaustion, drunkenness and other problems.

Paramilitary troops had occupied several favelas after rival drug gangs killed six people in the Rocinha shantytown on Wednesday.

Tavares estimated the crowd numbered about one million people. Thousands more milled around surrounding streets, drinking beer and holding impromptu parties.

Others watched from a flotilla of private boats in the bay and from hotel rooms along Atlantic Avenue, the main thoroughfare along the beach.

With its reputation for decadence, drugs and debauchery, Rio was the perfect venue for the Stones, former bad boys of rock who transformed into a powerful business operation.

The Rio concert was part of the band's "A Bigger Bang" tour, which kicked off in the United States in August and was the top-grossing rock tour of 2005.

Fans came from as far away as Japan and Europe for the show.

Reuters

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**A12** **The WORLD** **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2006**

# Scientists: California quake may trigger another Katrina

**ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**—MANY DENSELY populated US regions face the threat of flooding as disastrous as after Hurricane Katrina, due to urban spread into river floodplains, scientists say.

A moderate flood could destroy the levee system protecting towns and cities along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers in northern California, said Jeffrey Mount of the University of California.

"The probability of a catastrophic levee failure in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the next 50 years is two in three," Mount said on the side-

lines of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual conference.

Mount gave a worrying presentation to the conference entitled "The Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta: The next New Orleans?"

He said one of the frequent earthquakes in California could destroy the levee system that has been built up since the middle of the 19th century, sending flood water over a wide area.

Mount said it could have a similar impact to the Asian tsunami in 2004.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin delta takes more than 40 percent of California's rainfall and covers some 280,000 hectares. It is the main source of water for about 23 million people, of California's 34 million population.

But most of the land is below sea level and is protected by more than 1,600 km of levees.

Another 5,600 ha zone around St. Louis in Missouri faces a similar threat from the Mississippi river, according to Adolphus Busch, head of the Great Rivers Habitat Alliance.

Busch, a member of the Anheuser-Busch brewing family, said there had been excessive urbanization in the zone despite major floods in 1993.

He said the housing and development had drastically reduced alluvial grounds that normally sponge up flood waters.

Nicholas Pinter of the University of Southern Illinois said that efforts to protect St. Louis against flooding ultimately had increased the risks.

Eighty-five percent of the Mississippi is now held back by levees and the level of the river has risen by 4 m since the start of the century, he said.

The situation is now similar to New Orleans, which was devastated last year after Hurricane Katrina smashed its water defenses, and in the Sacramento region.

"In spite of 70 years of federal flood control efforts and nearly 40 years of federal flood insurance, the costs of flooding continue to rise and there is no federal policy to provide direction for future actions," said Gerald Galloway, an engineering professor at the University of Maryland.

Galloway said that development had to be restricted in risk zones and water defenses had to be strengthened as the authorities in the Netherlands have done since disastrous flooding there.

AFP



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## Thaksin battles 'lame duck' label

By Nopporn Wong-Anan

**BANGKOK**—DURING HIS FIRST FIVE YEARS as Thai prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra and his pro-business, modernizing government enjoyed a smooth ride through everything from bird flu to the tsunami to resurgent Muslim separatism.

But as the telecoms tycoon and self-styled "CEO premier" embarks on a sixth year in office, a chorus of critics from graft-busters to ex-business partners and anti-privatization campaigners are making his life increasingly difficult.

Fighting rear-guard actions on so many public relations fronts, Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thais) party will have little time in the coming months and years to get on with the business of government, analysts say.

Few independent analysts believe he will not complete the remaining three years of his second term, but they see Friday's session with 100 academics on constitutional reform as typical of the appeasement tactics he will need to deploy.

"The government has become a lame duck as Thaksin has lost his integrity of leadership," said political and investment analyst Somjai Phagapavivat of Bangkok's Thammasat University.

"He will be busy keeping the lid on big holes, closing down on all constitutional channels to dismiss him," Somjai said.

"He won't have much time left for the economy."

One major headache is a vocal backlash from the Bangkok middle-classes over his family's \$1.9 billion, tax-free sell-off of their stake in Shin Corp, the telecoms empire he founded, to Singapore state investment company Temasek.

He won a jet-off on Thursday when the Constitutional Court refused to launch a probe into the controversial share sale.

But he is far from out of the woods.

Two weeks ago, vengeful former business partner and media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul amassed a crowd of 40,000 people—the biggest antigovernment demonstration in 14 years—calling for Thaksin to stand down.

A repeat protest a week later drew 20,000 to central Bangkok, and Sondhi has vowed to keep going until Thaksin is out of Government House. Some analysts are saying this week's Constitutional Court decision could boost the numbers again.

The unusually strident political tone caused the stock market and the baht to wobble last week.

It has also thrown a major question mark over Thaksin's ability to push through an ambitious \$43 billion scheme to overhaul public infrastructure.

Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpisal admitted this week that long-term foreign investors were asking about the sustainability of the planned "megaprojects," which range from rail and subway networks to rural irrigation systems.

Reuters





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## Suddenly, a landslide

THE NUMBERS VARY, BUT WHATEVER THE ESTIMATE, the import is not in doubt. An entire barangay was wiped off the map last Friday, in late morning, when a landslide buried Guinsaugon, one of 30 barangays in St. Bernard town, Southern Leyte.

Perhaps 1,300 residents lie under some 30 feet of mud; perhaps the number is closer to 1,800. It is hard to be either exact or certain. The weather conditions that led to the landslide have made rescue and relief operations extremely difficult, even risky.

The last survivor rescued was pulled out from under the muck on Friday afternoon. Since then, only dead bodies have been recovered. (As of 4 p.m. yesterday, that grim statistic stood at 62.) The number of those not yet accounted for remains unbearably high.

As many as 300 of the missing are elementary students, believed trapped in their school when the rain-saturated slope of the mountain came crashing down. One of the six teachers buried with them sent text messages hours after the landslide, confirming they were still alive. But since 7 p.m. last Friday her cell phone has fallen silent.

It is unseemly, even illogical, to compare tragedies. But it is also only natural. Out of instinct, we reach back into the past to help make sense of the present.

In many ways, the Guinsaugon tragedy is "worse" than the shocking PhilSports stampede. There is the sheer difference of scale—possibly almost 2,000 victims died. There is the absolute unexpectedness of it all; the victims had not joined a queue for the chance to win big or small prizes. Many of them were simply going about their ordinary business; a number of them had in fact gone back to the village because, after two weeks of rain, the weather looked like it had finally cleared. Then the devastation—the mountain shook, and an entire barangay disappeared.

Not least, there is the anguish of the innocent: Hundreds of children did what society expected of them, going to school because, as many of them must have been told, education was the ticket to a better life—only to learn the most fateful lesson of all. Death comes like a thief in the night.

Ours is still a religious nation, so it is only to be expected that in the last few days both public discourse and private conversation have touched on the threshold question: How can God, or Allah, or Providence, allow something like this to happen?

There are no easy answers; there may in fact be no answer. But the Christian faith that a majority of Filipinos still profess to follow offers a radical response: Those who believe in a suffering God believe that their God is right there among the suffering.

## Lessons from the past

IT SEEMS WE HAVE LEARNED SOME LESSONS from the natural disasters of the past. The organized reaction to the Guinsaugon landslide has been disciplined, proportionate, and on target.

Both the district congressman and the provincial governor responded to the first news of the tragedy with resolve and dispatch. In the first hours after the landslide, they proved to be the principal and largely accurate (if somewhat harassed) sources of information.

The national government also responded in a timely manner. A few hours after the landslide, the President went on the air, to offer her sympathies and to announce her instructions. These included the redeployment of Army soldiers to help in the rescue, and the hiring of a ship to transport NFA rice and other necessities.

The Philippine National Red Cross spearheaded both rescue operations in the village and a fund-raising campaign in the Geneva headquarters of the Red Cross; it managed to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in aid in a matter of hours. Through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the US Embassy also announced the redeployment to Leyte of two Navy ships that were en route to the Balikatan military exercises in Sulu.

Much remains to be done, of course. As many as 1,800 residents may still lie under 30 feet of mud. Some 1,500 survivors need immediate assistance and long-term rehabilitation. But all told, what needed to be done in the first 48 hours of the tragedy was done; even politicians and political players like outspoken bishops observed a moratorium on political buck-passing and blame-throwing. All that will come later, inevitably, like fate.

IF YOU ARE INCLINED TO FAVOR THE ADOPTION of a new constitution and new form of government, the following story should give you pause because it gives you an insight into the character of the mastermind behind the Charter change. It also gives an indication of what he is capable of doing once he becomes the head of Parliament.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, the principal driving force behind the Cha-cha, has been giving out fake "congressional awards" to visiting heads of state and high officials from other countries, former Sen. Francisco Tatad told a breakfast forum last Saturday. Moreover, he may have sown the seeds of a diplomatic row with China by recognizing Taiwan as an independent nation, thus violating our own "One-China" policy. Recently, he founded the Philippine-Taiwan Parliamentarians' Friendship Society, with all the members of the House of Representatives as founding members. Not only that, he conferred a fake decoration on President Hu Jintao of China when he visited here. Expect a diplomatic protest from the Chinese Embassy.

In just two years, De Venecia has also conferred the decoration on President Musharraf of Pakistan, President Kalam of India, Speaker Oleksy of the Polish Parliament, Secretary General Anders Johnson of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU President Sergio Paez of Chile, and former Prime Minister Aznar of Spain. The award has provoked serious questions, especially among diplomatic observers. De Venecia calls it the "Congressional Medal of Achievement." But there is no record of this award having been created by Congress. The citation carries only De Venecia's signature, without that of Senate President Franklin Drilon, who heads the other half of Congress.

The citation says: "This Award is bestowed on behalf of the Filipino nation and in accordance with Resolution No. 453 of the House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines." But a check on the records of the House showed that Resolution 453 has nothing to do at all with the award, Tatad said.

"HR 453," he said, "is entitled 'Resolution Directing the Committees on Labor and Employment and Foreign Affairs to conduct a joint

I THOUGHT I'D SHARE SOME SONGS WITH you on the first day of Edsa week. You might want to sing or hum them at the Shrine or outside of it.

The first one is called, "The Great Pretender," sung by the Plotsters and dedicated to You-Know-Who (This one required little revising!)

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender/ Pretending that I'm doing well/ My need is such I pretend too much/ I'm lonely but no one can tell/ Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender/ Adrift in a world of my own/ I've played the game but to my real shame/ I'm left to grieve all alone.

Too real is this feeling of make-believe/ Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal/ Yes I'm the great pretender/ Just laughter and gay like a clown/ I seem to be what I'm not, you see/ I wear on my head someone's crown/ Pretending I'll still be around. Too real is this feeling of make-believe/ Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal. Oh, yes, I'm the great pretender. (repeat refrain)

Next song is called "Yesterday," sung by the Beat-less, still dedicated to You-Know-Who. Yesterday/ All my troubles seemed so far away/ Now it looks as though they're here to stay/ Oh, I believe in yesterday/ Suddenly, I'm not half the Pres I used to be/ There's a shadow hanging over me/ Oh, yesterday came suddenly. Why I have to go I don't know/ I couldn't say/ I did something wrong now I long for yesterday.

Yesterday/ power was such an easy game to play/ Now I need a place to hide away/ Oh, I believe in yesterday/ Why I have to go I don't know/ I couldn't say/ I did something wrong/ All I'm now is yesterday.

Next song is called "Dancing King," sung by Alma Naman, dedicated alternatively to Fidel V or Joe De V and the Cha-cha boys:

You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your life/ See that guy, watch his scene, dig in the Dancing King/ Life is black and the mood is low/ People have nowhere to go/ Just come into my parlor, get into the swing/ You've just found the Cha-cha King/ You can never stop this guy/ He is old but his ambition is high/ With a bit of grease money everything is fine/ You're in the mood for a dance/ And then he grabs his chance. You are the Dancing King, still in heat, only sev-

## As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



congressional inquiry on the status of the implementation of the government's ban on deployment of overseas Filipino workers to Iraq and look into the alleged neglect of duty of officials of the Department of Labor and Employment and Foreign Affairs tasked to implement the said ban." It was introduced by party-list members Crispin Beltran, Rafael Mariano, Teodoro Casino, Liza Largaña-Maza, Satur Ocampo and Joel Virador.

Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives has any part in the creation of the award. "It appears to be purely De Venecia's personal invention and initiative, but this is not made known, whether to the public or to its recipients," Tatad said.

The marathon air talks between the Philippines and Bahrain—still going on in Makati as of this writing, more than 60 hours after they began last Feb. 16 in Clark Field, Pampanga—could end up with one of the most contentious, disagreeable and anomalous bilateral air negotiations the country has entered into.

Like any good host, the Philippines laid out the welcome mat for the delegation from Bahrain, a tiny speck of desert land in the Arabian Gulf, not much bigger than Metro Manila.

The talks were a debacle for the Philippines. The Philippine air panel—headed by Transportation Undersecretary Edward Haron Pagunsan and composed of representatives from the departments of foreign affairs, trade and industry, and tourism, as well as from Clark Development Corp. and the local airlines—was hamstrung by poor leadership and meddling from interlopers with vested interests.

## Songs for our times

## THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiras



enty/ Dancing King, feel the need for the ecstasy.

You're a teaser you turn 'em on/ Leave 'em burning and then you're gone/ Looking for a leader? No one else will do/ You're in the mood for a dance/ And then he grabs his chance/ You are the Dancing King, still in heat, only seventy/ Dancing King still looking for your last destiny.

Next song is "No Woman, No Cry," sung by the Wallers, dedicated to the detainees, soldier and civilian.

No Woman, no cry (repeat 4 times)/ I remember as we go to sit/ In this prison yard in Ghost Town/ Oba, observing the hypocrites/ As they would mingle with the good people they meet/ Good friends we have had, oh good friends we've lost along the way/ To find your future you can't forget your past/ So dry your tears I say.

No Woman, no cry/ No Woman, no cry/ Little darlin' don't shed no tears/

No Woman, no cry

Said, said, said I remember as we go to sit/ In the government yard in Ghost Town/ And then Magdi would make the fire light/ Log wood burnin' through the night/ Then we would cook plants and porridge/ Of which we'll share with you/ My faith is my only carriage/ So I've got to push on through/ But when we're free

Everything's gonna be alright (repeat till now)

Next song is "Bad Moon Rising" sung by the Need for Credence Revival, dedicated to the troopers (this one required no revision at all!)

"I see a bad moon arising/ I see troubles on the way/ I see earthquakes and lightning/ I see bad times today/ Don't go around tonight/ Well, it's bound to take your life/ There's a bad moon on the rise.

I hear hurricanes a-blowing/ I know the end is coming soon/ I fear rivers overflowing/ I hear

Here are some interesting sidelights of the talks shared by somebody who was there:

On the eve of the negotiations, a dinner was hosted by Amable Aguiluz V, chair of the AMA Computer School, for all delegates. Aguiluz, who goes by the honorary title of "ambassador," is actually a businessman who established a computer school in Bahrain in 2002.

That made him a party of interest in the talks and, indeed, Aguiluz showed his true colors when he openly took the position of the Gulf state in his public remarks during the dinner. Our source said Aguiluz closely monitored the talks and lobbied Malacanang on behalf of Bahrain. For a "Philippine ambassador," such a behavior is appalling, even treasonous.

On the other hand, Pagunsan is said to have been less than resolute in supporting the position taken by the rest of the RP panel—that the airlines of both countries forge a commercial agreement as a condition for granting Gulf Air more flight rights to Manila.

Pagunsan was not a firm leader, our source said. Concerned about what the Arabs might do if they were rebuffed, he endorsed the Bahraini demand for more air rights (an additional of six flights weekly) to his panel members. In other words, Pagunsan was more worried about Bahrain's reaction than what was best for the Philippines.

This, despite knowing that the RP-Bahrain air market is modest—this tiny island sent less than 1,800 tourists here last year and there are only 30,000 Filipino workers there.

When the rest of the panel stuck to its position, Pagunsan came around, but not decisively enough. He wavered and left the RP position hanging, instead of presenting a united front to the Arabs.

Fortunately, the rest of the panel stood firm to uphold the national interest amid tremendous pressure from the powers-that-be.

Whatever the outcome of these talks, our hearts go out to the RP panel members for their principled stand.

the voice of rage and ruin/ Don't go around tonight (repeat refrain)

Hope you have got your things together/ Hope you are quite prepared to die/ Looks like we're in for nasty weather/ One eye is taken for an eye/ Don't go around tonight/ Well, it's bound to take your life/ There's a bad moon on the rise. (repeat till warning is heeded)

Next song is E.D.S.A., sung by the Village People Power, dedicated to the youth.

Young man there's no need to feel down/ I said young man pick yourself off the ground/ I said young man 'cause your world's going down/ There's no need to be unhappy/ Young man there's a place you can go/ I said young man when salvation's so slow/ You can go there and I'm sure you will find/ Many ways to force the right time.

It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ They have everything for young men to employ/ You can hang out with all the boys/ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ You can get yourself clear/ You can do what you feel/ You can win in the last reel.

Young man, are you listening to me/ I said, young man, what do you want to be/ I said, young man, you can make real your dreams/ but you've got to know this one thing/ No man, does it all by himself/ I said, young man, put despair on the shelf/ And just go there, to the E.D.S.A./ I'm sure you can help them today. (repeat refrain)

Young Man, I was once in your shoes/ I said, I was down and out with the blues/ I felt, no man cared if I were alive/ I felt the whole world was so five/ That's when someone came up to me/ and said young man take a walk up the street/ There's a place there called the E.D.S.A./ They can start you back on your way. (repeat refrain)

Last song sung by, of, and for everyone. Ang bayan kong Pilipinas/ Lupain ng ginto't bulaklak/ Pag-ibig ang sa kanyang palaro/ Nag-alay ng ganda't dilag/ At sa kanyang yumi at ganda.

Gahaman ay nahalina/ Bayan ko, binilang ka/Masadlak sa duwa/ Iban mang may kayang lumapad/ Radurging mo at umiyak/ Bayan pa kayang sakdal ding/ Ang di inagmang maknapi/ Pilipinas kang ininumutya/ Pugad ng liha at dalita/ Akung adhiha makita kang sakdal laya.



## Remembering Edsa I

AFTER EDSA I AND EDSA II, AND AS ONCE again we approach Feb. 21, thoughts of "people power" are very much alive. People power dethroned a president and gave birth to a new Constitution. Today, once again, there are movements toward the dethronement of a president and the adoption of a new Constitution.

Historical context is important. Revolutions do not happen and constitutions are not written in a vacuum. They are born under the auspices of prevailing political convictions.

The 1987 Constitution was born in the aftermath of the 1986 peaceful revolution which not only ousted President Ferdinand Marcos but also totally redesigned the governmental and constitutional system. Speaking of this event, the Court said in 1992: "From the natural law point of view, the right of revolution has been defined as an inherent right of a people to cast out their rulers, change their policy or effect radical reforms in their system of government or institutions by force or a general uprising when the legal and constitutional methods of making such change have proved inadequate or are so obstructed as to be unavailable." It has been said that "the locus of positive law-making power lies with the people of the state" and from there is derived "the right of the people to abolish, to reform and to alter any existing form of government without regard to the existing constitution."

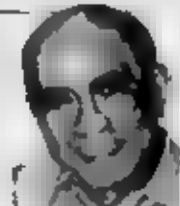
The 1987 Constitution was preceded by the Freedom Constitution which also affirmed that "the new government under President Corason C. Aquino was installed through a direct exercise of the power of the Filipino people assisted by units of the New Armed Forces of the Philippines." But it was also this Freedom Constitution which called the 1986 Constitutional Commission into existence.

Can Edsa I happen again? What was its context?

There is a tendency to attribute the rebirth of democracy to the events of the four days in February 1986. Those days will forever be remembered

## SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.



as a shining moment in a people's history; but the four days do not tell all. Edsa was but a part of a process, albeit the most memorable both for the intensity of its emotion and its dramatically eye-catching and infectious symbolism. But the long process of which it was a part includes both the struggles that precipitated the imposition of martial law and the struggles during the long, dark nights that followed it.

There was never a moment, starting on Sept. 21, 1972, that the nation was not moving toward Edsa. The underground struggle, the bloody encounters, the groans of torture victims, the pamphleteering, the rallies, both political and religious, the silent storming of heaven by contemplative nuns, the whirl of fax machines, the electoral struggle under the most adverse circumstances, and, yes, even the "collaboration" with the enemy—each in its own way contributed to the assurance of rebirth. In the end, Divine Providence, which the Filipino people had first formally invoked in its 1935 Constitution, put the pieces together and let them explode into the celebration that was Edsa.

When I reflect on the events of 20 years ago, I see hubris as Divine Providence's trigger in bringing about the final downfall of the ruler. Feeling that he bestrode the world like an unconquerable colossus, President Marcos dared all challengers to a "snap election." That was November 1985. The events that followed brought out a multiplicity of heroes no one of whom could have achieved the result alone.

First, presidential hopefuls sacrificed their am-

bition (realistic or not) in favor of one presidential candidate supported by all. They anointed a housewife inexperienced in governance, derisively branded by the "wise" as "waking alone," who would become the "foolish" instrument through whom Providence would confound the proud. Her battle cry of "tama na, sobra na" captured the public imagination.

Then, in the early weeks of February 1986, whether by free choice or by desperate necessity, new heroes emerged. The computer operators unmasked the conspiracy to cheat the "foolish" woman of her electoral victory. Government intelligence officers discovered a RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement) plot for a coup d'etat. Trapped, the soldiers made a defiant stand. To the death, they said.

Then followed the call of Jaime Cardinal Sin and Benigno Aquino for the populace to rescue the beleaguered soldiers. The people came in massed brigades of all ages and sexes to shield the soldiers from the threatening mortars of the President.

The mortars were never fired. Fundamental humanity overcame the soldiery. Loyalty to the sovereign people prevailed, and the soldiers turned their back on the Commander in Chief. In that fact, too, there was heroism. And the dramatic encounter between civilian and soldiers, bound together by the bonds of love for the same country and for the same people, is what is celebrated as *salubong*, symbolic of a people determined to join hands and work for a new future.

I do not see the emotion and the drama of February 1986 being repeated today. Not yet. But is it coming? Will hubris again precipitate radical reform?

We can paraphrase Auden's *Elegy to JFK*:

What Edsa was, it was,  
What it is fated to become  
Depends on us  
Remembering its birth,  
How we choose to live  
Will decide its meaning.

## Where are the people?

THERE IS A HAND-GAME AMONG KINDERGARTEN children that I have always found amusing because it deals with a question that is of vital importance in any sphere of human endeavor, exercise or ritual.

The game is a sequence of two: in the first, hands are clasped with eight fingers interlaced and thumbs put together in the shape of a roof, while we declare: "This is the church." Then both forefingers go up and we say: "This is the steeple." The thumbs part at the command: "Open the door!" Then the inevitable question: "Where are the people?"

And we see a desolate, empty church.

In the second part, both hands are clasped with six fingers interlaced in between the palms so that when you open the door, the people are there, wiggling merrily, and the church comes alive.

Both manipulations accurately describe the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The first shows a government where the people are alienated from an administration that ignores them and, in return, they distrust and even consider illegitimate. In the second, there are people indeed, but they are enclosed in between the clasped palms of Ms Arroyo—they are the appointees and allies beholden to her, wiggling merrily out of sheer delight amid the torrents of perks, privileges and purses going their way at her behest.

So where are we, the people, otherwise known as the citizenry, a.k.a. constituents?

We are the unseen, invisible non-entities outside the Clasp, breaking our backs and working our hands to the bone to pay the EVAT and VAT and all the other VATS in the Arroyo magic alphabet, which is meant to ensure the continuous flow of perks, privileges and purses for the well-being of the Clasp.

And to ensure our continued and perpetual bondage to the Clasp, we are now being hoodwinked into believing that the troubles that beset us are a result of "degenerate politics," which is the offspring of a bad Constitution. Therefore, this Constitution must be changed immediately, to save the "nation," which to them is the other name for the Clasp.

It is of no consequence that before she took over

## KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Norahyn Mustafa



the presidency—bringing along her gang of degenerates—by way of a mob rule that she now vehemently condemns, we were living quite peacefully.

(By the way, in the definition of terms, it is important for us to know that "government," "democracy" and "state" can be used interchangeably to refer to Ms Arroyo, so that any opposition to her is branded as "destabilization efforts against the government" or an act "undermining democracy"; and those opposed to her continued stay in Malacañang, "enemies of the state.")

Now the question "where are the people?" in the seemingly inexorable rush to change the Constitution, to "shatter it to bits and mold it nearer to (her) heart's desire" is the very timely subject of the book just off the press, *Trapo Governance and the Cha-Cha Conspiracy* authored by former Undersecretary for Constitutional Reform Manuel Valdehueza Jr., who was thoughtful enough to send me a copy.

Because I received it only last Thursday, I had just enough time to browse through it before writing this piece, and believe me, it was hard for me to put the book down. Though it tackles politics, a field that is beyond my ken, it is so engaging and so readable, it has given a political blockhead like me a very clear picture of why we are in the mess we're in.

Valdehueza has no hidden agenda except what is clearly stated in the title, you can literally judge this book by its cover, which has a unique and very fitting design rendered by Ramon Simico.

But Valdehueza doesn't just tell us what's wrong. He shows us that something can be done: there is hope. And we need not fall into the trap of the so-called "people's initiative," which is actual-

ly a "sleight-of-word" redefined by Ms Arroyo's local government lackeys to refer to themselves.

And he tells us where the people are. They are in the barangays.

This is about empowerment of the people (last we looked at the Constitution, all government authority emanates from them) through barangay assemblies and "grass-roots" parliamentary discourse, all of which are provided for and stipulated in RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991. Except that no one has bothered to implement the law.

In fact, right after the elections, right after the government coffers were reportedly wiped out to fund her campaign—consequently forcing her to announce that we have a "fiscal crisis"—one of Ms Arroyo's first policy announcements was the plan to cut the internal revenue allotment of local governments, which would have seriously crippled the country's smallest political unit—the barangay—where, in a true democracy, real power lies.

So, you might wonder: Where is Valdehueza—now a gentleman-farmer in his place of origin, Cagayan de Oro—who has no hidden agenda and who sides with no person, party or persuasion, coming from?

Well, the epilogue (titled "Where Do I Stand?") should be good enough for the most suspicious minds. Excerpt:

"The Constitution must become the Social Contract we never had!"

"No longer should we settle for the presumption that a document cobbled together by a few, adopted by a few, and promulgated by a few will automatically command the respect and compliance of the many... Such a document, served up *hugang manao*, to people with little or no idea of what role or rule it holds for them today and tomorrow, is not *ipso facto* a binding one."

"Sure, let us amend the Constitution, which is the template of our Social Order, and fix the bureaucracy, which is its operating system, but most important of all, let us upgrade and energize its power source—the Filipino people!"

Comments to rubajay19@yahoo.com

## The value of a title

## THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



school, which is today known as the De La Salle-Araneta University.

From the time of the original purchase (which was undertaken in good faith), AIA occupied the land, faithfully paying the real estate taxes therefor, constructing buildings thereon, and subdividing it into several portions with the approval of the appropriate government agencies.

Thirty-two years later, a certain Jose B. Dimson filed a complaint against AIA. In his Dec. 18, 1979 complaint, Dimson alleged that he discovered that his land had been illegally occupied! According to him, he got his title to the land as attorney's fees from a certain Bartolome Rivera. Rivera alleged in turn that he inherited his title as an heir of Ma. Concepcion Vidal. AIA's case has been lumped with other cases filed in connection with OCT 994.

In 1997, a regional trial court ruled in favor of Dimson. The decision was subsequently upheld by the Court of Appeals and then by the Supreme Court. AIA has appealed the high court's verdict.

Some lawyers have told me that there is a legal principle at work here, too: the Doctrine of Laches. It is to land what the statute of limitations—which sets specific periods for the filing of cases—is to certain suits or crimes.

Basically it would be like this: you buy a piece of land in good faith. You develop it, improve it; you may even, at certain points, sell off parts of the original property you bought to other people. Decades after you bought the land, someone comes along and claims that the land is his. The

claimant naturally stands to benefit from all the improvements you put on the land. And anyone who bought a piece of that land from you, or bought from someone else who purchased a piece of that land from you, stands to lose his lot because of this claim. Had you been fairly warned that there was a dispute over the property you bought, would you have made improvements on that land, or would people have bought from you in good faith? And if the claim, made decades after improvements on the land have been made so obviously and publicly, is allowed to prosper, wouldn't it be unfair both to you and everyone else with titles to parts of the land you originally bought? That's the rationale behind the Doctrine of Laches.

One thing is sure: this case involves a huge property and so many people and entities. If AIA loses its appeal, its case will be the third precedent case affirming that OCT 994 of May 3, 1917 is not real. Anyone holding a TCT (Transfer Certificate of Title) from this OCT will, in essence, be considered by the courts to be holding a fake title.

Well, is there anyone else holding such TCTs? Yes, among them: the national government—450 hectares (covered by 1,254 land titles), and within its ambit are roads, national highways, portions of the North Expressway, Edsa, the Bonifacio Monument, public markets and other public areas; private/business owners—1,210 hectares (covered by thousands of land titles), which cover property occupied by the Manila Central University, University of the East, Eternal Garden Memorial, River Grand Central, Sony Corporation, Mojica Properties, to name a few.

Indeed, the implications of this case are far too wide and virtually all-embracing that its resolution requires no less than a Supreme Court of the Philippines stringing up a band. This certainly is one question that deserves the determination of the whole, not just a division, of our highest court.

Comments welcome at [www.quezon.net.ph/blog](http://www.quezon.net.ph/blog)

## Memories, legacies of authoritarianism

IN CYBERSPACE, THERE EXISTS A VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE-genie called "Wikipedia." Ideas fly through the worldwide web faster than light. Unfortunately, we still use the 19th century QWERTY keyboard, so we have to resort to anagrams and mnemonics to speed up data entry. For example, we just tap out the characters I-M-H-O instead of laboriously typing out "in my honest opinion." To the dyed-in-the-wool Netizen, four key-strokes are all it takes to express sincerity.

## COMMENTARY

WIKI stands for "What I Know Is..." Butch Hernandez

and it perfectly describes Wikipedia. While this resource is neither authoritative nor infallible, it does give a fairly accurate gauge of the modern world's perception of a particular person, item, issue or topic. This is so because Wikipedia is "the free encyclopedia" that anyone with Internet access can add something to or edit in real time, instantaneously.

Here is an interesting Wikipedia entry: "Three things make Ferdinand Marcos different from any Philippine president before him: first, he created and led, along with Gen. Fabian Ver, Gen. Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, a military-backed regime that arrested, tortured and murdered thousands of Filipinos; second, the 14 years of his dictatorship warped and all but ruined the country's major institutions—chiefly the legislative, judiciary and the military; and third, he, along with his family and cronies, looted so much wealth from the country that up to now investigators have a difficult time determining precisely how many billions of dollars have been siphoned away."

Just a few days ago, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) put the finishing touches to "Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan," a video documentary to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Edsa Revolution of 1986.

As part of the FWPP's mandate, we endeavored to make the documentary compelling and interesting enough to appeal to youthful sensibilities. We test-screened the video before an audience composed almost entirely of young men and women who were born in or after 1986. The oldest in the audience was 21 years of age. We administered a survey to gauge audience reaction, and the results we got raised quite a few interesting points.

As many in our generation suspect, these young men and women have a very sketchy notion of Edsa I. Their knowledge of things—like the First Quarter Storm, the Roxas 12, the Jabidah Massacre and other similar events—from this particular point in Philippine history was even more limited.

They were incredulous when they saw on screen how Metrocom troopers accosted hapless long-haired teenagers, and summarily snipped off their flowing locks. The images they were watching were so far removed from their own realities that they might as well have been watching a film about World War II.

On the other hand, everyone in this audience said they wanted to see more productions like "Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan" and the INQUIRER's "Edsa 20: Isang Larawan." Like the rest of us, they too have a right to the truth, preferably in high definition video and 5.1 Dolby digital audio.

Why has it been so hard to accurately remember an event so historically significant as Edsa I? More to the point, why has it been so easy to strip Edsa I of social relevance?

In 1999, the Gaston Z. Ortega Peace Institute, the Ateneo de Manila University, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, and the FWPP co-organized the "Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship: Memory, Truth-Telling and the Pursuit of Justice."

This multi-sectoral forum was the Southeast Asian segment of an international initiative, called "Legacies of Authoritarianism," led by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other areas of inquiry were Latin America and South Africa.

The entire exercise explored in scholarly fashion how people went on with their lives in the aftermath of repression and state-instigated violence. (The highlights of this comprehensive study are contained in "The Art of Truth-Telling About Authoritarian Rule," University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.)

Most of the participating countries—including ours—are emerging democracies, having shaken off their authoritarian yoke in the past 10 years or so. Others, like Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Yugoslavia have just begun the process, while Argentina has been in transition for more than two decades.

The people from these countries share two characteristics: they all endured "widespread state violence that suppressed individual and group freedoms"; and in each country, persons and communities have emerged, wanting to speak about it.

In their introduction, the work's editors namely, Ksenija Bilbija, Jo Ellen Fair, Cynthia E. Milton and Leigh A. Payne raise the following points:

First, political transition—from authoritarian rule and dictatorship to formal democratic governance—does not necessarily bring dramatic change in the lives of individuals.

Second, even with public processes [for truth-telling], individuals and groups feel excluded and certain truths remain taboo. Blanket amnesties and political accommodations—to avoid polarization and breakdowns—have produced "forgive and forget" strategies that close off official avenues for public truth-telling and accountability for past violence.

Third, impunity, amnesty laws and legal systems that protect the legal and economic privileges of the powerful pose obstacles to investigation, prosecution and imprisonment for corruption and violence.

Finally, the similarities between the new democratic order and its old authoritarian predecessor heighten disillusionment with social and political change, and weaken the motivation to work toward it.

By the way, the Wikipedia entry also said "most of Marcos' accomplishments were overlooked after the Edsa Revolution" and that "according to a recent survey, many Filipinos prefer Marcos' rule because of the shape of the country today. Many admire his autocratic, willful style of government, saying that his style of leadership is sorely missed and needed in the post-Edsa Philippines where too much democracy has ruined the body politic, with fractious standoffs in Congress and deadlocks in the Senate; and actors as well as traditional politicians being elected into public office."

"On the other hand, many absolutely despise his regime," his shoving the free press into his pocket, his curtailing civil liberties such as free speech and the right to peaceably assemble, as well as his dictatorial control over the government. There is no middle ground. It is quite evident that Marcos left behind a society that was polarized after the Edsa Revolution."

It took a lot of courage to face down the Marcos regime's mechanized armor and battle-tested Marines with nothing but prayers and decimation. Apparently that amazing display of genuine People Power was not enough. Today's youth are closely watching us, wondering where that courage came from.

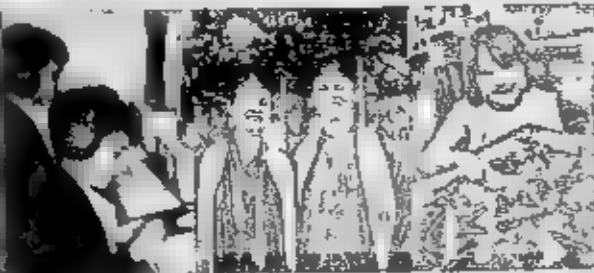
Butch Hernandez is executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP).



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Blasphemy  
in 'South Park'

IRREVERENT HUMOR IN CARTOONS? WHILE we're at it, what of the blasphemy of Jesus Christ and the vulgar disrespect of His holy mother in Jack cable TV's "South Park" series?

An episode depicts Jesus Christ as a nitwit. Another pits Him against a magical illusionist, making of the Son of God a clumsy tyro who cannot even do an illusion of multiplying loaves and fish. At the end of the episode, Jesus looks pathetic, and the viewer thinks it's funny.

And what of a "South Park" Blessed Virgin Mary with red liquid flowing between her two feet, and a voice-over: "She's a virgin, indeed!"

In Ebraling vs. the Division Superintendent of Schools of Cebu, children of Jehovah's Witnesses defied their school and defended their religious belief. So did the members of Iglesia ni Cristo in Victoriano vs. Elizalde Rope Workers' Union. So did a Baptist nurse in St. Charles, Missouri who was fired because she refused to violate the teachings of her religion. And now, our angry Muslims brethren.

Here, in this Christian country, we allow "South Park."

—JO M. IMBONG,  
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Family Media Advocacy Foundation,  
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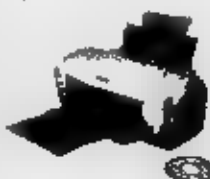
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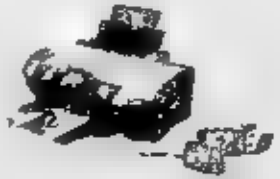
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More important  
than health care costs

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL Report titled the "Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of health care." (PDI, 2/15/06)

The article quoted the book "A Call to Action" written by Pfizer's chair and CEO, Dr. Hark McKinnell. Unfortunately, excerpts from the book were taken out of context.

Dr. McKinnell's book is intended to stimulate a much-needed dialogue on the need for sustainable health care solutions around the globe. "A Call to Action" focuses on the much larger issue of the costs of the disease and the value of wellness, instead of merely computing the costs of health care. The latter approach has been detrimental to both the health and wealth of nations.

Regarding the specific issues of pricing medicines, it is true that the industry does not simply price a medicinal product to "recapture the R&D budget spent in development." It is far more complicated than that; a number of factors, including the high cost of R&D, are considered in the final determination of a pharmaceutical product's price.

On the subject of research and development, it is our global responsibility to contribute toward the R&D of new medicines so that unmet medical needs of patients throughout the world are addressed. Only one out of 10,000 candidate molecules makes it through the grueling process of development and clinical trials, and the latest estimate of bringing a new product to the market has surpassed \$1 billion. Countries must invest in the future of medicines to ensure that future cures are discovered.

It is also important for the public to know that Pfizer is doing its part to provide access not only to medicines but to better health care. Our innovative patient programs are now enjoyed by tens of thousands of Filipinos nationwide. Our "Sulit na Gamot" initiative educates consumers on the value of research in bringing about better health outcomes. Pfizer also continues to implement its largest community program, the "Leaders for Health," in partnership with the Department of Health and the Ateneo Graduate School. The program seeks to build the health care infrastructure in many doctor-less municipalities all over the country. Since its launch in 2002, the program has benefited over 1 million Filipinos in 48 poor municipalities.

The discussion needs to be broadened to include the need to improve our health care infrastructure and not just focus on the cost of medicines. Pfizer is willing to participate in this endeavor.

—GERRY E. BACARRO,  
president and country manager,  
Pfizer, Makati City

## Edsa I in news gallery

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF EDSA I REMINDS me of my visit to Newseum in Arlington, Virginia, in 1997. While there, I noticed there was nothing about the historic Edsa I in its News History Gallery.

When I wrote the editor of Freedom Forum, the organization in charge of Newseum, about it, I asked him if Edsa I was deliberately left out because it was a bloodless uprising (unlike the one in China's Tiananmen Square), and therefore it was considered not worth featuring in the News History Gallery.

I told the editor that to us Filipinos, the exclusion of Edsa I was glaring because it was a very important milestone in man's struggle for freedom. I pointed out that history shows that people who died for freedom did not always achieve it. But we Filipinos, in an unprecedented act of courage, won freedom without shedding a drop of blood.

The editor of Freedom Forum replied, asking for a copy of the front page of a Philippine newspaper, featuring Edsa I. I wrote the Inquirer editor in chief, informing her of the request and requesting her to inform if she could grant the same.

I have yet to visit Newseum again, but I am hopeful that the News History Gallery now features Edsa I.

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# Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

## Jolo bar blast won't stop RP-US war games

**JOLO, SULU**—THE BOMB EXPLOSION THAT KILLED A MAN AND wounded 28 others here on Saturday night will not stop the Balikatan exercises as police remained clueless on who, or what group, was behind the bomb attack.

US Army Lt. Colonel Mark Zimmer, public affairs officer of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines, said "there are no plans of changing the schedules of our medical, dental, and engineering action programs or any activities of the Balikatan in Sulu."

Filipino and American soldiers continued with their water well and school building construction in Mambung town yesterday. They, however, were heavily secured. At least two MGS20 helicopters and a P3 Orion spy plane were flying to ensure the soldiers' safety.

Zimmer refused to comment if he thought the explosion was meant to disrupt the Balikatan exercise, which opened Saturday afternoon.

"We don't want to speculate. We will not say anything until the investigation is completed," Zimmer added.

The lone fatality in the blast was identified as Domingo de Leon, a Filipino from Cavite City who belonged to a Manila-based firm contracted by the Americans to maintain portable toilets here.

De Leon, according to police, suffered multiple shrapnel wounds and third degree burns.

Sulu police chief Senior Supt. Ahirum Ajrim admitted that police could still not say who was behind the attack.

"We really have no idea, we're waiting for the results of the investigation," Ajrim said. He said based on initial findings, the explosion

inside the Vimar Videoke Place was caused by a type of dynamite commonly used for blast fishing.

Roselyn Sajin, the videoke bar's cashier, said the explosion happened in the third table from the entrance of the establishment.

Sajin suffered burns and wounds in her face and legs.

Most of the injured were women working in the bar as guest relations officers. Four other Filipino soldiers were also wounded.

Ajrim said he had declared a full red alert status in Jolo, "and we are all in full combat position in the event [of another] explosion."

The explosion came after protests against the Balikatan in Jolo and the shooting of stray dogs allegedly by American soldiers.

An American military official defended the shooting of stray dogs, saying the animals were a danger to people.

"We do not condone the shooting of these animals, but we are also raising concern on the safety of our people, the safety concern of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the local civilians," said Col. James Linder, overall commander of the Joint Special Operation Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP).

"The animals that were destroyed appeared to be stray and unhealthy, and as I said we are looking into this and we are doing investigation to ensure that we are doing the

proper procedure," Linder added. **Julie Alipala with a report from Jeffrey Mattem, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

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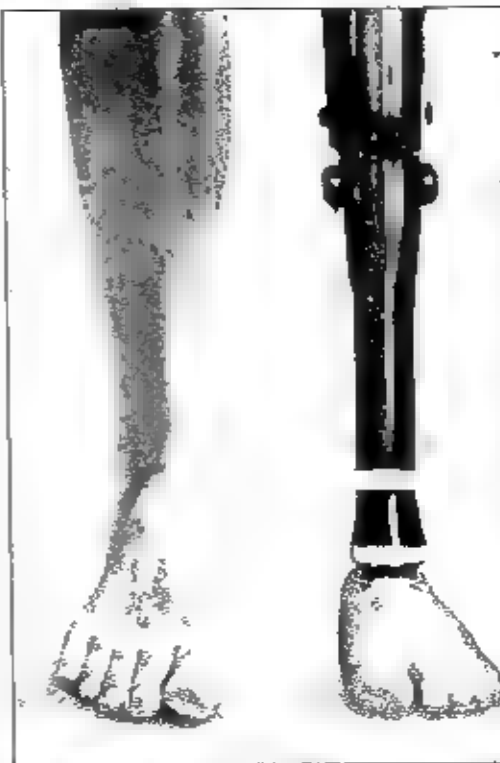
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**ONE** of the Japanese dolls on exhibit at the Provincial Capitol Complex of Camarines Sur by the Japan Foundation.

## Japanese dolls on tour reach Camarines Sur

**PILI, CAMARINES SUR**—JAPANESE DOLLS may be the most expensive in the world with a set that could be worth millions of pesos.

But, to a Japanese group that brought the dolls here, they are a mirror of Japan's culture.

"The appreciation of Japanese dolls is the first step to understand our culture," according to Tsutomu Suzuki, director of Japan Foundation, a group that promotes Japanese culture through exchange programs.

Suzuki said the Japanese dolls reflect their aspirations and customs as a distinct people and had been part of their tradition for thousands of years.

To celebrate the 50th year of Philippines-Japan Friendship, the Japan Foundation brought in to Camarines Sur 70 Japanese dolls for exhibit at the provincial capitol complex.

The Japanese doll exhibit has also toured Marikina last month and will be in Baguio City next month.

In cooperation with the provincial government of Camarines Sur, the Japanese doll exhibit will run until Feb. 19 at the function room of the Convention Center at the Capitol Complex here.

Gov. Ray Villafuerte said the exhibit will help entice investors to the province.

Villafuerte added that the provincial government also provides free Japanese lessons.

Suzuki said that, like the characters of their written language, the Japanese dolls express the realities of everyday life in Japan.

The dolls have distinctive regional attributes which, over the centuries, have evolved into many diverse forms.

He said Japanese dolls are not really toys but expressions of *koi* (love), traditions and everyday life which had been handed down from generation to generation. **Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

**Kabataan, Iguhit Mo ang Bukas, Kulayan Mo ang Pasa**

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University of the East - Kalubayan  
"Kambayan St."  
Oil Media, 29" x 29"

**4th Place**  
**MICHAEL JOHN L. PAMA**  
La Consolacion College - Bacolod  
"Sumi-Sumi at Ika"  
Tayo Pigma sa Paghahago"  
Oil Media, 27.5" x 34.25"

**5th Place**  
**MARK A. NICLAT**  
Taylor's University  
"Pag-ibig, Pag-asa at Pansinang Ang Pangunahing Kalibutan ng Serbis sa Tugang sa Tugang ng Pagsapag"  
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University of Northern Philippines - Vigan  
"Lama-rama Talay-talay Pausing Pines Pigma"  
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## Across the NATION

## Rubber planting seen step vs air pollution

DAVAO CITY—RUBBER FARMING DOES NOT only bring financial benefits but also helps clean the air, a local expert said.

Natural rubber is currently in high demand in the international market primarily because of the expansion of the automobile market of China and the expected growth of other key industrial countries.

But Dr. Eugenio Alcalá, vice president for research and extension of the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato, said aside from providing financial gains, rubber could help in restoring environmental health.

Alcalá said mature rubber trees have the capacity "to sequester carbon."

He said based on initial results of a study, which he did not specify, it was found that a hectare of at least 21-year-old trees is capable of absorbing a cubic meter of carbon from the atmosphere.

"If this calculation is confirmed, natural

rubber-producing countries can claim carbon credits based on the Kyoto Protocol," Alcalá, also executive director of the Philippine Rubber Board Inc. (PRBI), said.

Rubber's role in cleaning the air is one of the pitches being used by the PRBI in pushing for the extensive cultivation of the trees in the country.

PRBI said it seeks to increase the country's rubber land to 1.5 million hectares from the current 100,000 hectares.

The provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga Sibugay and North Cotabato remain the country's major producers of natural rubber and also host the country's oldest rubber estates.

Alcalá said Mindanao alone has a potential to expand its rubber area to 1.2 million hectares "without disturbing existing croplands."

Apart from extensive land available for cultivation, Alcalá said Mindanao also has favorable weather. Ryan Rosaura, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## ROUNDUP

## Farmer held for slay

MID-SAYAP North Cotabato—Police here arrested a farmer for allegedly killing his father on Thursday. Mid-sayap police chief Supt. Chino Mamburam said the suspect, identified as Gerardo Anihon, 44, of Barangay Villanca, repeatedly struck his father Jose, 65, during a fight over the turning on and off of lights in their ancestral home. He said the elder Anihon fell to the floor but instead of stopping, the young Anihon took a bolo and hacked his father to death. The suspect now faces parricide charges. Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## Army man charged

TACURONG CITY—An Army colonel charged with the Nov. 23 demolition of houses in Datu Abdullah Sangli town in Maguindanao has posted bail. Col. Jerry Jalandoni, commander of the 604th Infantry Brigade based here, and several other soldiers, were charged with violation of domicile, malicious mischief and robbery in band by 80-year-old Bai Nawila Pangilan at a local court. Pangilan told prosecutors that on Nov. 23, soldiers under Jalandoni told her and her family to vacate Barangay Kamasin in Dabu Abdullah Sangli town. She said the soldiers returned later. One of them allegedly threw her food and others took turns throwing away her family's clothing. While some soldiers demolished their house, others allegedly took livestock. Jalandoni denied these, citing video shown on a local TV newscast. Nash Maabana, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## Higher port revenue

PARANG, Maguindanao—The Autonomous Region Ports Authority (RPA) said it seeks to increase its revenues to P24 million from the current average of P240,000 within the next five years. The agency said the increase in collection would enable it to offer shipping firms safer, antiterror compliant facilities for cargo and passengers. RPA Manager Alexandre Ampatuan said ARMM Gov. Zaidy Uy Ampatuan wanted planned ports upgrading done by using income from port fees. Dr. Endatun Talusan, Polloc Port manager, said the port built in 1976, is underutilized. Nash Maabana, PDI Mindanao Bureau



## 2 soldiers wounded

TANDAG, Surigao del Sur—Two soldiers were seriously wounded in a clash with communist rebels in Tagu town on Feb. 15. Lt. Joel Recasa, spokesperson of the 58th Infantry Battalion based in Tagu town, some five kilometers from this capital town, said about 20 New People's Army (NPA) rebels ambushed the government soldiers who were on patrol in Sitio Ibu in Barangay Anahao-Daan, Surigao del Sur police chief Senior Supt. Arthur Sanchez identified the wounded soldiers as Pfc. Ramer Licab and Pfc. Julius Palahang, who were brought to a medical center here. Maria Malaya, National Democratic Front spokesperson in the province, denied Recasa's claim that a rebel was killed. In a phone call to the INQUIRER, Malaya said Wednesday's ambush was part of an intensified campaign by the NPA against the government to force President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down. Bert Pacote, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## 'Truth caravan'

CITY OF CALAPAN—Thousands of Mindoreños welcomed the arrival here on Feb. 17 of a nationwide caravan, dubbed Lakbay Mamamayan Para sa Katolohanan at Reporma, which started in Cotabato and Dipolog on Feb. 1 and Feb. 7 to generate awareness on indigenous people's rights, agrarian reform, mining hazards and constitutional reform. Bert Almonte, one of the local organizers, said the motorcade started in the morning from Roxas town followed by Mass in Pinalamayan town. Madonna Vitale, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

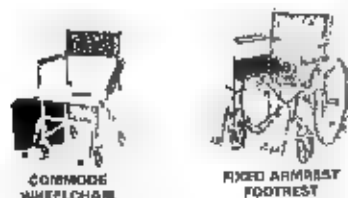
## Bomb material seized

CAMP VICENTE L.M., Laguna—The Cavite police confiscated 140 sacks of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used in making bombs, in a jeep and arrested a police officer who acted as escort of the illegal shipment in a checkpoint in Carmona, Cavite on



Wednesday. Supt. Rodol Sermonia, Intelligence chief of the Cavite police, identified the suspect as PO3 Nixon Hagan, assigned at the 402nd provincial police mobile group based in Nasugbu, Batangas. Also arrested was Jovito Berido, the driver of the jeep. Sermonia said the chemicals were hidden inside sacks of charcoal and were due to be delivered to Tanza. Markon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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# Mild quake hits 3 Mindanao cities

DAVAO CITY—A MILD EARTHQUAKE HIT AT least three cities in Mindanao yesterday morning.

No one was reported hurt in the quake that lasted for several seconds.

Ferdinand Tagliocap, science analyst of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) in Southern Mindanao, said the tremor, with its epicenter off the ocean deep southwest of Digos town, Davao del Sur, occurred at around 8:49 a.m.

The quake of tectonic origin registered intensity 3 in the Richter scale in General Santos City and intensity 2 in the cities of Davao and Kidapawan, Tagliocap said.

The Office of the Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao said no untoward incident was reported.

With the rains continuing in several parts of Mindanao over the weekend, Tagliocap said the towns near steep

mountains could be "susceptible to landslide." Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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<b>Amount of Premiums</b>			
AGE	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
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36-39	243.80	609.50	1,219.00
40-43	303.80	759.50	1,519.00
44-47	387.80	969.50	1,939.00
48-50	463.80	1,159.50	2,319.00
51-53	555.80	1,389.50	2,779.00
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Have you ever been told you had cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high blood pressure or tuberculosis, kidney disorder, nervous disorder or HIV-AIDS? If YES, underline which ailment(s). \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now in good health? ☐ YES ☐ NO

What is your HEIGHT? \_\_\_\_\_ & WEIGHT? \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:** If you answered "YES" to any of the questions above, please give full details including doctor's name and address, hospital, nature, date and result of consultation, diagnosis or treatment. Use separate sheet if necessary.

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**\*For the APPLICANT/OWNER to answer:**

1. Total life insurance in force on Proposed Insured Company: Brand/Cover: Accident Brand/Sum of Insure \_\_\_\_\_

2. Has there been or will there be any change in any existing insurance in force? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Will premium for the insurance applied for be paid by a policy loan from any existing policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**IMPORTANT:** If yes, please furnish details (name of company, policy number and amount of insurance being replaced).

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\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**APPLICANT/OWNER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Per DTI MCR issued 8 DEC 2005 Section 4000



# Danger signs of landslides

By Tonette Orejas  
PDI Central Luzon Desk

WATCHING OUT FOR SIGNS of a landslide can save lives.

Standing objects like trees, posts, poles and fences that tilt give hints of ground movement and the possible loosening of soil and rocks, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Cracks on mountain slopes and loose deposits indicate that these are not stable areas and are prone to bigger landslides, Phivolcs chief Renato Solidum said.

Solidum asked people to stay away from steep slopes traversed by streams and creeks that can funnel the soil and other debris downstream.

He also asked people to look out for road cuts, which indicate that the soil underneath is weak.

In the case of the killer landslides in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, Solidum said heavy rainfall in the area—480 millimeters from Feb. 1 to 16 compared with the monthly average of 137 mm—most likely triggered the disaster.

"There had been so much rain in the area and water added to the weight of the soil," Solidum said.

The presence in the area of a fault zone that generates earthquakes was a contributory factor, he said.

A volcano, Mt. Kabilian, lies in St. Bernard but this has been inactive and the tremors there on Friday could not have been caused by volcanic activity, according to Solidum.

## Install rain gauges

Geologist Arnulfo Cabantog of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau earlier asked landslide-prone upland villages in the Central Luzon areas of the Sierra Madre and Zambales mountain ranges to install improvised rain gauges because very few of these instruments had been installed by the weather bureau.

Rain gauges are used to measure the amount of rainfall in a particular area. The level of water trapped in a container

at certain hours can help upland villagers know if heavy rains had fallen in the area.

Cabantog said the measurements were bases to guard against landslides and flash floods.

The provinces of Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Tarlac in Central Luzon, and the mountainous villages in Quezon were hit by landslides and floods in November and December 2004. The disaster left more than 1,000 dead and about 5,000 families homeless.

## PVC pipe

The improvised rain gauges, according to Cabantog, could use PVC pipes that are four inches in diameter. The top should be open to catch the rainfall while the bottom should be well sealed to prevent dripping.

Thus, he said, should be placed in an open space in a common area such as a school, barangay hall or chapel.

A ruler should come in handy to measure the water level. When the level reaches 100 mm, or 10 centimeters in less than five hours, Cabantog said this should be taken as sign by residents to evacuate to safer ground.

Village officials should designate a person to measure the rainfall regularly and a team to share the information with the other villagers.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration considers rains in an area heavy if gauges measure 7.5 mm an hour. In Japan, Cabantog said, 200 mm of rainfall was the standard warning for possible landslides.

Residents must also consider the number of days rains have drenched an area. If the mountain soil was saturated for days, as happened during the four successive typhoons in 2004, another rainfall could trigger a landslide.

Residents should also watch out for damming at the peaks of hills and mountains. A sign to watch out for is when there's little water flowing in a river even when it is raining, Cabantog said.



CHOPPERS wait in line in the rice fields of St. Bernard to conduct a search and rescue mission in the landslide-hit portion of the town.

## Officials ...

From page A1

nomical Services Administration (Pagasa). La Niña is a weather phenomenon characterized by heavy rains.

In fact, in the next 24 hours, heavy rains brought by La Niña are expected to hit Davao Oriental, the Cotabato provinces and the Caraga region—all in Mindanao, Pagasa said.

Without citing specific places, Cruz said landslides, in fact, had already been reported in other areas of the country. (See story on Page A4.)

## Mapping

Cruz said the government had begun mapping out the towns prone to floods and landslides. Once the list is ready, he will ask the media to help disseminate the information.

Officials of the National Disaster Coordinating Council will also discuss the matter with governors, mayors and village chiefs.

The House committee on housing and urban development yesterday asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to promptly publish the list of all landslide- and disaster-prone areas in the country to adequately forewarn the public.

Committee chair Rep. Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) had come up with a landslide-susceptibility map as early as 2004 but nothing was done to relay that information to local government units (LGUs).

Zialcita said the MGB report would be useful in the government's assessment of what had been done to educate LGUs about the map.

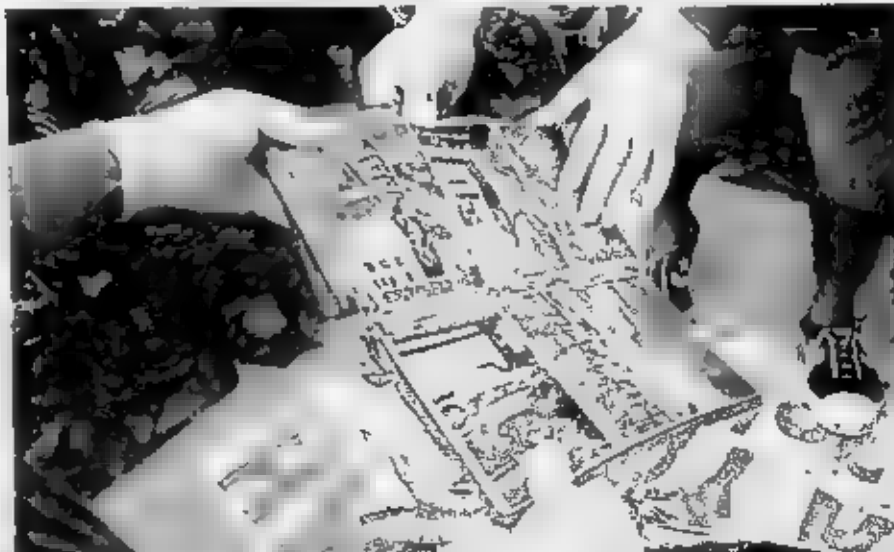
He lamented that the MGB had failed to issue the necessary warning to residents of St. Bernard and, thus, the catastrophic landslide that buried an entire village in the town.

## Preventable

"The [MGB must] update us on how they have conducted their information dissemination for their landslide susceptibility map," said Zialcita.

On Saturday, an official of an environment protection group blamed the government for failing to take safety measures that could have prevented the landslide.

Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment, said the government had identified St. Bernard as a landslide-prone area in 2003.



AMONG those found in the mud was a victim still clutching to this photo album, perhaps the only worldly possession he tried to save before he was buried alive.

He said the deaths could have been prevented, if not minimized, if the government had acted early enough by initiating a massive reforestation program and by setting up a locally based early warning system.

"There should be proper information dissemination of all matters pertaining to potential landslides and other disasters. A publication of all areas that are vulnerable to landslides should be the first step in educating and forewarning our people," Zialcita said.

## Early warning

There are three things that local officials can do to prepare for a disaster, officials said.

One is to evacuate the residents to safer ground. Another is to apply an engineering solution to an impending disaster, such as the building of dikes. The third and cheapest way is to set up an early warning system, such as the one now in use in Aurora and Quezon provinces.

Cruz narrated how residents in flood-prone areas in Southern Luzon had placed posts that can measure the rise of water in a river.

Alert level 4, for example, would mean that the people need to leave their homes for higher ground.

"In Quezon, when (the water) reaches level 4, the mechanism (in place) is to ring the church bells. One person would ride a bike telling the people that the water is rising. There are many indigenous and creative ways (to set up) early warning devices," the defense secretary said.

The Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) has urged the government to adopt concrete measures to address the causes of people's vulnerability to disasters.

CRDC advocacy officer Katharina Ann Berza said in a statement that an average of 317 disasters hits the country every year, affecting millions of Filipinos.

She noted a rising frequency in disasters during the last decade and a subsequent increase in the number of people affected. Last year, a total of 10.4 million people were affected by 440 disasters. Ten years ago, 408 disasters affected 9.9 million people.

"One would assume that given these disasters, a comprehensive disaster management system and program should have already been in place and a separate government body that gives special and undivided attention to the many tasks of disaster management formed," CRDC said.

Disappointingly, the CRDC observed, the disaster response system in the country was reactive, emergency-focused and relief-centered.

The group noted that while the government was allocating more than 30 percent of its annual budget to foreign debt servicing, it was setting aside a measly 0.1 percent for calamity funds.

For his part, Von Hernandez, campaigns director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, urged the government to prepare for the consequences of logging and climate change.

"There had been warnings that the combined threats of destructive logging and an increase in extreme weather events caused by climate change would intensify the impact of disasters," Hernandez said in another statement. With reports from Michael Lim Ubar and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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## Amsterdam ...

From page A1

establishments opening their doors and flinging back their red curtains, hundreds of tourists and locals seized the opportunity to see a prostitute's bedroom, watch a brief live peep show or chat with a lap dancer.

Harrowing reports of forced prostitution and human trafficking have caused a public outcry in recent months and even prompted calls from councilors for the 800-year-old red light district to be shut down, to the fury of many sex workers.

Stories of petty crime and gang violence also dominate

"The open day is not only to promote the red light district but also to help change the image of the area because we think it is too negative," said organizer Mariska Majoor, a former prostitute who now runs an information center for the district.

"There are not just problems here," she said.

Prostitution has been fully legal in the Netherlands since 2000, and sex workers are self-employed and subject to tax.

However, one rights group estimates that around 3,500 women are trafficked to the Netherlands each year from eastern Europe and Asia to work in secret brothels or illegal escort agencies, where they are often held captive and abused.

Tourist authorities admit the district—a clutch of narrow alleys and canals lined with sex shops, brothels and neon signs—is as big an attraction as Amsterdam's museums and coffee shops, where marijuana is freely smoked and sold.

Every night visitors throng the streets, agog at the scantily clad women sitting behind huge red-lit windows, but only a fraction venture inside.

"This is a very good idea," said 28-year-old Dutchman Maarten Rutsema, grinning after experiencing his first ever lap dance at the Bar La Vie en Proost.

"I've never been inside anywhere like this before ... It's pretty casual, not as tense or hostile as I imagined," he said.

Reuters



# A Personal and Collective Privilege Speech on Serious Revenue Generation and On the Term-Sharing Agreement at the Committee on Ways & Means

By: Congressman Herminio G. Teves  
February 13, 2006

Mr. Speaker, fellow members of this august body, I rise on a Personal and collective Privilege on the matter of revenue generation and the term-sharing agreement of the Chairmanship at the Committee on Ways & Means.

This representation served diligently as Senior Vice Chairman of said committee in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and now the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress. I have always been passionate about revenue generation. I believe that it is only through higher revenues that we can balance the budget and reduce our dependence on borrowings. But the tax laws that we pass in this chamber are for naught because so much revenue per type of tax except the tax not due to systemic failure and graft in the country's main tax collection agencies, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

I have fervently proposed several measures that are designed to reduce or minimize corruption in our revenue collection as well as address several systemic errors at the BIR. I personally believe that with these proposed measures we will be able to maximize revenue take and thereby, achieve a balanced budget the soonest possible time.

A cornerstone proposal from this representation is the deletion of the secrecy and confidentiality provisions in tax payments under the 1997 Tax Code. This will help institute transparency and reduce enmeshment between taxpayers and tax collections. Said enmeshment is the biggest source of graft and has already been draining the government's coffers for quite a long time.

I also proposed to President Arroyo that an Executive Task Force be created to estimate potential revenue per type of tax, such as individual income tax, corporate income tax, value added tax, excise tax, etc., and another Task Force that will undertake audit on collection vis-a-vis potential revenues. Nobody is currently mandated to audit revenue collection, not even the Commission on Audit (COA).

On the excise tax of sin products, the DOF advocated for the reclassification of brands based on current market prices to generate a revenue of P27.7 billion. The World Health Organization recommended that cigarettes must be taxed high (similar to other countries) to make it prohibitively expensive so as to generate revenue and curb smoking harmful to health especially among the youth. President GMA herself made a public pronouncement that "there is need to address the harmful effects of the so-called sin products" by instituting an adjustment in the tax rates thereof vis-a-vis the actual market retail price.

Congress, however, wavered down the proposed imposition of sin taxes and instead approved a mere 20% increase in the tax rates. This representation voted "No" to this wobbled down version. Thus, he was excluded in the bicameral committee on the said tax measure, after which I published an article on the subject "How serious are we in raising revenue for our government?" Mr. Speaker, respected colleagues, actual revenue collection from the Sin Tax Law registered at a dismal P2.96 billion last year, 80% short from the projected P15 billion additional revenue from this tax measure. (Business World, February 2, 2006)

Chairman Lapus designated this Representation as Chair of the sub-committee on oversight. Immediately thereafter, said sub-committee undertook several inter-agency meetings and conducted in-depth studies on each type of tax and came up with estimates of potential number of taxpayers and expected revenue vis-a-vis BIR's collection. It was uncovered that there are loopholes in our tax system that needs to be addressed if the government is indeed serious in generating the much-needed revenues without resorting to borrowing.

**On the Individual Income Tax: 2004 Collection is P95.8 billion whereas the potential collection is estimated at P150 billion.**

It was uncovered that the potential number of tax payers on individual income tax alone is approximately 7.07 million based on statistical data from NSO, LTO, DOF and Bureau of Local Government Finance, SSS and GSIS. On automatic withholding from compensation covers, the recorded number of employees with wages/salaries of over P5,000 monthly is 5,370,181 while actual number that paid under the substituted filing mechanism is 2,855,500, a difference of 4,216,819. This poses a shortfall in collection amounting to a minimum of P35.8 billion. The BIR nor the DOLE has no list of employees who could have withheld the income tax from their employees but failed to remit the same to the BIR.

On self-employed individuals, The SSS database showed 5.28 million self-employed members but BIR's self-employed individual taxpayers only reached 433,876 or a mere 8.2% of the potential. If we compare this to the data of the LTO, there are approximately 3,583,000 privately owned cars and trucks registered.

In 2004, the number of self-employed individuals who filed income tax returns totaled 694,305 and those who actually paid only totaled 291,601 with payments amounting to P4.854 B and P7.553 B as withholding at source, a total of only P12.408 or 2.29% of the tax paid by employees as withholding.

**On the Corporate Income Tax: The 2004 Collection is P131.68 billion whereas the projected CIT would amount to P180 billion.**

The number of corporations registered with SEC is 304,070 while actual number that filed corporate income tax (CIT) is 1,5582 or 38% of total number of SEC registrants. The number of companies that actually paid their CIT is 70,434 or 23.16% paid CIT amounting to P131.68 billion. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should be mandated to furnish the DOF and BIR the lists of corporations by location, primary purpose of business activity, capitalization, and major incorporators in order for the BIR and the DOF to be able to match information submitted to them by companies. Similarly, the net income after tax on each player of industries and corporations should also be given to the BIR. Value Added Tax (VAT) – the most abused form of tax by taxpayers.

In 2004 total taxable sales of 161,536 players is P4.039 trillion while the zero-rated sales and exempt sales are P699.094B and P471.209B respectively. These are not included in the output VAT computation. The total VAT collected amounted to only P72.8923 or 1.8% of sales whereas the projected VAT is P124.54 billion.

The government used to collect 3% sales tax on most goods and services, however, this was replaced by a 10% VAT. It is sad to note though that because of certain loopholes in the VAT system coupled with abuses on input VAT deduction and corruption, the VAT revenue collected is very much lower than what could have been collected on the 3% sales tax.

## Bureau of Internal Revenue Summary of Quarterly VAT (2550Q) For Year 2004

Site	Taxable Sales	Zero-rated sales	Exempt sales/receipts	Total Output Tax	Total Input Tax	VAT PAID	Effective VAT Rates	No. of Taxpayer
CEBU	50.90 B	4.625 B	583.64 M	5.09 B	4.92 B	855.80M	1.68	8,565
LTS	1,525 T	564.65 B	447.40 B	152.55 B	110.22 B	42.24 B	2.81	1,046
MKT	392.21 B	28.99 B	9.02 B	39.22 B	32.33 B	9.70 B	2.47	34,434
MLA	207.22 B	66.69 B	4.19 B	20.72 B	20.95 B	5.99 B	2.89	41,354
QCY	692.99 B	34.14 B	10.02 B	69.30 B	60.2 B	13.51 B	1.95	76,137
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,868 T</b>	<b>699.09 B</b>	<b>471.21 B</b>	<b>286.88 B</b>	<b>228.62 B</b>	<b>72.89 B</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>161,536</b>

The 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2005 (excluding Cebu) shows a total sales of P1,511.794B, the zero-rated is P294.051B and exempt sales is P234.72. The tax paid is only P14.739 B or 0.97% less than one percent (1%) of sales. On sales to exempt entities alone VAT deficiency is P47.12 B in 2004 and P23.47B in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2005.

## January - June 2005

Site	Taxable Sales	Zero-rated sales	Exempt sales/receipts	Total Output Tax	Total Input Tax	VAT PAID	No. of Filed Returns
CEBU	DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE						
LTS	686.08B	212.37 B	216.95 B	70.04 B	51.43 B	6.70 B	1,768
MKT	99.93 B	20.62 B	9.17 B	16.14 B	12.92 B	1.59 B	35,029
MLA	20.52 B	35.00 B	2.05 B	5.46 B	26.54 M	952 M	23,110
QCY	176.50 B	26.05 B	6.54 B	28.37 B	24.17 B	5.45 B	56,813
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>983.02 B</b>	<b>294.05 B</b>	<b>234.72 B</b>	<b>120.02 B</b>	<b>88.77 B</b>	<b>14.69 B</b>	<b>116,720</b>

In my letter to BIR Commissioner dated Nov. 21, 2005, I questioned why the BIR did not implement Revenue Regulation No. 2-88 Section 4 where the practice to allow VAT registered sellers to automatically deduct their sales to exempt and zero rated in their output VAT declaration is wrong. Similarly, I mentioned that under Revenue Regulation No. 9-89 provision on mixed transaction states that "when the tax payer is engaged in zero rated and effectively zero rated sales as well as taxable domestic and exempt sales of goods and services and the amount allowable, input tax paid cannot be directly and fairly attributed to anyone in the transactions. It shall be allocated proportionately to each category of transactions. BIR's current to totally deduct all input VAT to the reduced output VAT is a double whammy to our government. The point that I raised in said letter was not with a desisting silence.

The telecommunications is now the biggest and most profitable industry. The PLDT, the leading telecom company, is expected to surpass P30 B in net income for CY 2005.

This industry has a huge potential VAT revenue if the BIR is not remiss in their tax collection effort. In a letter addressed to Hon. Excellency, Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dated January 26, 2006 that was covered through the Honorable Speaker Jose de Venecia, this Representation conveyed the tax payments of the three largest telecom players. For PLDT, VAT payments as percentage to sales is quite low. For 1999 it was 1.28%, in 2000-0.82%, 2001-1.12%, 2002-1.64%, 2003-1.58%, and 2004 -2.54%.

For Globe telecoms, their VAT payments as percentage of their sales is as follows: 1999 negative 3.43%, 2000- negative 9.29%; 2001-negative 7.60%; 2002-negative 3.57%; 2003- negative 0.01 % and 2004 - positive 0.44%

For Smart telecoms, their VAT payments as percentage to their sales is as follows: 1999 - 0.69%, 2000- negative 0.68%; 2001- positive 2.26%; 2002- positive 0.53%, 2003 - positive 0.48% and 2004 negative 0.56%.

In 2004, Smart's alleged sale to exempt entities is P6.734 B or 0.2% to zero-rated entities P15.545 B or 19.33% a total of P22.599 or 27.53% considered non-taxable.

## History on VAT payment of the Three (3) Major Telecom's Companies:

### PLDT

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 47,077 B	P 5,041 B	P 6,617 B	P 2,367 B	P 0,786M	none	0,527	1.28%	638,287,166.85
2000	44,270 B	5,245 B	8,950 B	2,706 B	1,547 B	none	0,164	0.82%	1,054,757,186.35
2001	45,681 B	4,211 B	8,421 B	2,870 B	994.4 M	(7,342 M)	0,513	1.2%	750,218,417.96
2002	35,246 B	2,944 B	9,982 B	2,988 B	630.4 M	None	0,577	1.64%	71,916,885.99
2003	45,820 B	3,620 B	11,759 B	3,044 B	685.9 M	none	0,724	1.58%	811,983,889.27
2004	58,240 B	3,826 B	14,942 B	3,947 B	651.7 M	None	1.483	2.54%	393,498,053.20

### GLOBE

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 6,475 B	none	none	P 647.5 M	P 0.876M	351.05M	(0.222)	3.43%	-
2000	15.96 B	none	none	596 B	2,849 B	(222.27 M)	(1.483)	-9.29%	-
2001	25.77 B	none	none	2,577 B	4,531 B	(1,276 B)	(1.958)	-7.60%	-
2002	34.67 B	none	none	3,467 B	5,167 B	(1,958 B)	(2.27)	-3.57%	-
2003	39.93 B	none	none	3,991 B	3,986 B	(1,237 B)	(0.280)	-0.0 %	-
2004	42,641 B	419.1 M	3,105 B	3,991 B	3,447 B	(2,807 M)	8.190	0.44%	162,037,994.12

### SMART

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 3,384 B	none	none	P 838.47 M	P 0.581 B	(4,347 M)	0,583	0.69%	-
2000	24,468 B	none	none	2,446 B	2,601 B	none	(0.167)	-0.68%	-
2001	3,597 B	none	none	3,159 B	3,871 B	(167.53 M)	(0.715)	-2.26%	-
2002	45,826 B	2.42M	2.3 B	4,270 B	3,971 B	(715.50 M)	0.244	0.53%	67,590,727.59
2003	57,801 B	4,834 B	5,721 B	4,724 B	3,198 B	none	0.277	0.48%	778,223,748.38
2004	82,063 B	6,734 B	15,865 B	5,945 B	4,784 B	none	(0.461)	-0.56%	393,498,053.20

It is apparent that from 1999 - 2001 Smart had no sales to exempt and zero-rated and for Globe only in 2004 that declared exempt and zero-rated sales, why?

While consumers pay the whole of 10% VAT, it appears, however, that this is not being remitted to the government. What is the worse is that players do not declare sales to exempt and zero rated as taxable and over declare their input VAT thereby reducing amount of tax, disregarding BIR's Regulation RMC 17-96, Section 4 of RR-2-98 and RR 9-89 with regards to exempt and zero rated sales.

Not only are the players of the telecommunication industry not declaring as output VAT on their sales to exempt and zero rated sellers. They are not paying VAT on the sales of cell cards that companies claim to be the biggest bulk of their sales. The reason given is that the payment of VAT shall be made upon the utilization of the card, in contrast to excise taxes that are automatically collected upon withdrawal of the goods from the warehouse. As to why the BIR agreed to said argument remains a puzzle.

This representation is doubtful whether the projected additional revenue on the expanded VAT from 10% to 12% and the 12% VAT on fuel, power, air and water transport can be realized if the systemic errors in the VAT collection as practiced by the BIR will not be corrected. Firstly, the input VAT on operational taxable goods and services is 12%. Secondly, the input VAT on capital expense of the power, oil, air and water transport industries may not be totally utilized after few years as what happens to the telecommunication players where VAT on capital expense took several years to be utilized.

Undertaking all these proposals to increase tax collection from individual income tax both from the withholding of employees and from self-employed individuals, increase number of corporate taxpayers corresponding increase in corporate income tax (CIT) and increase collection of value added tax based on existing BIR Circular and Regulations on the matter will ensure that government revenue enough to achieve a balanced budget.

If however, our leaders are anxious to have additional revenue to finance important projects and increase food productivity and similarly increase per capita income for our people, we need not impose a tax that is detrimental to progress in productivity health care and to consumers. Instead of VAT on fuel and power which caused so much suffering to our entrepreneurs and consumers as proposed by many sectors of our society - freedom from debt consumers, party list representatives, civic and religious sectors. This representation proposes the tax on text messaging, not an additional VAT but direct tax on SMS messaging. Data shows that there are approximately 360 million text messages sent through the mobile networks every day. A tax of fifty centavos per text message would generate around P54.75 billion annually. This is almost double the expected annual P29 billion from the VAT on petroleum products and six times the expected P9 billion annually from the VAT on electricity. The revenues that could be realized from this can be earmarked for food productivity.

Further Mr. Speaker, I propose that the BIR vigorously collect VAT from the toll companies. Even if these toll companies are subject to VAT, they are not implementing it for the reason that the Toll Regulatory Board has not issued an order directing toll operators to include the VAT in their toll rates. If collected properly, the VAT from these toll companies could reach as much as P90 million per month since they have an aggregate monthly toll revenue of P900 million.

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, this Representation has consistently and diligently worked for the country's efficient revenue collection, which is parallel to the recommendations of Moody's. I have spearheaded an inter-agency task force to project potential revenue per type of tax long before my son was appointed as Finance Secretary.

On matters concerning the term-sharing as Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, there are a few things that I would like to mention.

Before our Christmas adjournment, a signature campaign was undertaken among members of the NPC requesting the Speaker to retain Cong. Lapus as Chairman. I was requested by other members of LAKAS to undertake similar signature campaign. I refused for the simple reason that it is not necessary because the Speaker himself has forged a gentlemen's agreement.

A vigorous media campaign ensued, attacking this Representation vying for the Chairmanship of the Committee. The issues bandied against me were bordering along the lines of absurdity one of which is my being old, then conflict of interest since my son Gary is the Secretary of Finance. It was published that father and son tandem will not serve the country well.

Conflict of interest exists when one of us is known to be exempt, if one of us has business interests to protect. The House economist, Congressman Jory Salcedo once said "that if this Representation will be appointed as chairman on the Ways & Means Committee, it would serve as a bonus because the son is the DOF Secretary". Conflict of interest can happen not only between family members but, as what happened under the Marcos regime, among enemies engaged in corrupt practices.

Congress is now proposing a Parliamentary form of government where the executive and legislative departments will merge hence eventually the Secretary of Finance will serve as the Chairman of Committee on Ways & Means.

Now, on the term sharing of the Chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Speaker, I want things to be on proper perspective for the record of this august body. When I brought up this matter on the agreed term sharing with the Speaker, he was willing to give me the chairmanship if and when my son Gary gives up his cabinet position as Secretary of Finance. "I said no way"

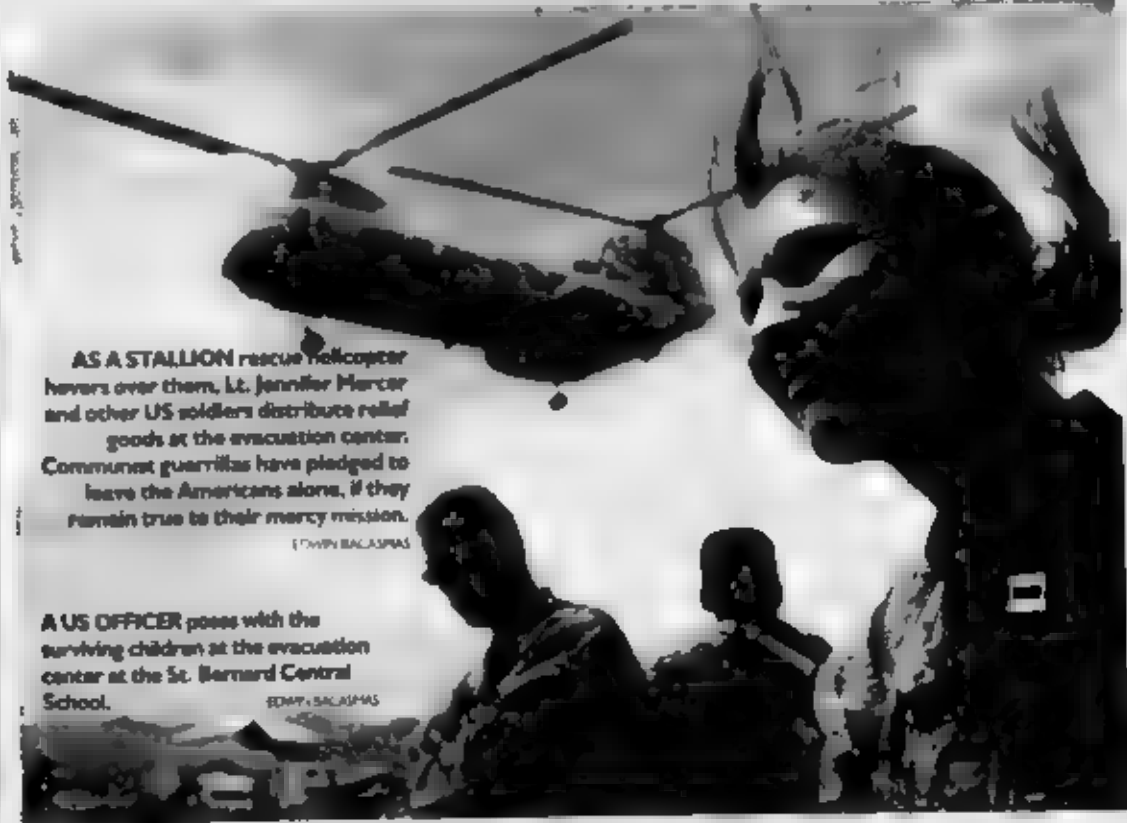
In the Business World article entitled "Outlook on RP mixed" (dated Feb. 10-11, 2006) states "In a report Moody's already the most pessimistic among the three major credit raters - said the government must first show "more progress" in improving tax collections, pass the 2006 budget, and make assurances that current economic policies will continue before the "downward pressure" on the country's credit ratings is relieved"

In the Business World article of February 6, 2006 it was stated that the House Ways & Means Committee has shifted focus to tax compliance. This representation is of the belief that the Speaker and the House Committee on Ways & Means will now be implementing what I have long been advocating these past 3 terms. Tax collection efficiency must be made a priority to promote transparency in tax collection. Deleting the Secrecy and Confidentiality provision in our Tax Code will not just enhance individual and Corporate Income Tax Collection it will address corruption problems as well. Input VAT and alleged deductions of exempt and zero rated sales on the Output VAT should also be scrutinized. The telecom industry players had experienced enormous gains yet they have huge amounts of questionable sales including outright declaration on taxable sales on cell cards. The over declaration of input vat and their reduced VAT liabilities is draining our government from the much-needed revenues. With respect to the VAT on the sales of these products, it needs to be immediately reconsidered to the consumers and the government are not placed in a disadvantaged position by the players.

With these precedents Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary for me to be Chairman of the Committee on Ways & Means considering that this administration in cooperation with the lower House under your leadership has now decided to pursue tax collection efficiency instead of implement new tax that burden our consumers and entrepreneurs. To this end, let me be clear that I have no other interest but to protect the interest of our people mostly the poor consumers and the coffers of our government.

Thank you.





AS A STALLION rescue helicopter hovers over them, Lt. Jennifer Mercer and other US soldiers distribute relief goods at the evacuation center. Communist guerrillas have pledged to leave the Americans alone, if they remain true to their mercy mission.

A US OFFICER poses with the surviving children at the evacuation center at the St. Bernard Central School.

## LANDSLIDE RESCUE MISSION

# US soldiers land in Leyte

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—Only three months ago, their image took a beating in street protests, public forums and congressional hearings after four of their men were accused of raping a Filipino woman at the Subic Freeport.

But controversy took a backseat yesterday as American soldiers taking part in the "Balikatan" exercises began arriving here to take part in rescue and relief efforts for victims of a landslide that buried an entire village.

The humanitarian contingent was mainly from the US 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit based in Okinawa, where the rape suspects were also stationed prior to being held under US Embassy

custody to face trial.

Thunderous Hilo helicopters landing near an evacuation center announced the presence of the US military volunteers in this grief-stricken town.

At least 15 US soldiers were seen setting up a command post at the municipal hall grounds.

Another group of officers, including a Filipino-American chaplain, surveyed the disaster site.

2nd Lt. Edward Rushing said his initial assessment showed that up to 75 US servicemen could be deployed to assist local rescuers.

Up to 1,000 of the 6,000 US troops taking part in the Balikatan exercises can be tapped to work here, said Lt. Col. Don Biadog, a chaplain of the brigade.

"I also did rescue operations in the 9-11 attacks but this is something

else," said Biadog, a Filipino-American originally from Bacolod City. "What I saw was mind-boggling and horrendous. I've never seen anything like this."

"I especially feel bad about the kids," said Biadog, referring to the more than 200 children feared buried in a local school.

Visibly more organized three days after the tragedy, the rescue teams are still on a "search-and-rescue mode," said Army Maj. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos, commander of the 8th Infantry Division.

They were nevertheless ready with more body bags and sacks of lime for new corpses to be found.

Amid the roar of bulldozers and choppers, Fr. Jose Labrador of the San Agustin Parish said Mass for the victims before noon.

## Rebs guarantee safety of GIs on rescue mission

COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS SAID YESTERDAY they won't attack American troops sent to help a landslide-hit province, but warned them not to stray into rebel zones or commit provocative acts.

The New People's Army guerrillas are active on Leyte island, where a massive landslide buried an entire farming village Friday, triggering fears that as many as 1,800 people may have been entombed alive.

In January, the guerrillas raided a police station in Leyte's Albuera town, seizing 31 M-16 rifles and pistols.

"The NPAs, if they would not be provoked, would not take steps against them, especially in this time of calamity," rebel spokesperson Gregorio "Roger" Rosal said.

But he said the rebels would react if

the Americans took a direct role in any covert anti-insurgency operation and ventured into their strongholds under the cover of their humanitarian mission, Rosal said.

"Of course, we don't believe that they are there for purely humanitarian reasons," he said.

The guerrillas are on US and European lists of terrorist organizations. They suspended Norwegian-brokered talks with the government in 2004, saying Manila has refused to take steps to remove them from the terror blacklist.

They have escalated attacks in recent months, hoping to help bring down President Macapagal-Arroyo who survived an impeachment last year over allegations she rigged the 2004 election. The rebels have condemned her as a US lackey. AP

## Buried school was home to math wizards

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—IT WAS ONE OF THE TOWNS best performing public schools, its pupils especially excelling in math competitions and academic exams.

That was Guinsaugon Elementary School before it became a virtual tomb last Friday.

Three days after a massive landslide, the fate of pupils full of promise despite their poverty, and of teachers dedicated to their calling despite their meager pay, remained uncertain.

Earlier, rescuers retrieved the remains of Gloria Navos, the teacher-coach of the Grade III pupils that emerged as champions in last year's Math Challenge. She also mentored this year's team that won 3rd place in the same competition.

### Team of wizards

Along with more than 50 bodies taken to a barangay hall now serving as a makeshift morgue, Navos was positively identified through her wedding ring, District Superintendent Erlinda Diaz said in an interview yesterday.

Presumed trapped in one of the four GES school buildings are Navos' 2006 team of Grade I math wizards, Aira Mae Solis, Jeffrey Coquilla and Marvin Berdon, according to Diaz, citing records of the annual contest among the 27 public elementary schools in St. Bernard.

The Grade I pupils' victory was no fluke: Also this year, the GES teams from Grades II, III and V all placed 2nd in their respective categories, Diaz noted.

The school has long built a sterling reputation with its classroom aces.

Diaz said it ranked No. 2 in terms of the average scores posted by its pupils across all levels during the District Achievement Test last school year.

If other major indicators are considered, like the Division and National tests, GES was ranked 3.5 overall that same year, she said.

"It's never far behind when it comes to academics and teachers' performance," she said, noting that while Barangay Guinsaugon may be relatively poor compared to urban villages, she doesn't recall it having alarming cases of malnutrition or dropouts among its pupils.

### 'Idyllic spot'

The school official said GES pupils must have been "reviewing" for this year's division test scheduled on Feb. 24 covering the key subjects English, math, science and Makabayan—when disaster struck.

She believed the majority of the pupils finished with their morning recess and were inside their classrooms when portions of nearby Mt. Kan-Abag came tumbling down on the village at around 10:30 a.m. that fateful day.

Official figures placed the number of GES students at 246.

Diaz said the campus was already there, occupying its otherwise idyllic spot by a lush mountain, the day she first moved to St. Bernard in 1968.

This means the villagers had never considered the school—or their homes—to be in a dangerous location, she noted.

That was until Mt. Kan-Abag moved and bitterly snapped the winning streak of the school's fledgling math Olympians and budding topnotchers.

## Faint sign of life in buried school

From page A1

cal corps, told reporters.

Asked if the sound indicated signs of life, Esquerro said: "Maybe, it's feasible."

His remarks clashed with an earlier statement by a Philippine National Red Cross official who said rescuers had talked to him that "indications will tell that those down there are all dead."

Romeo Orilla, information officer of the PNRC team at the disaster scene, said the school was located with the help of two dogs.

Orilla said he was quoting Rauf del Mar, head of the Bureau of Fire Protection's search and rescue team based in Cebu.

Esquerro, for his part, said he was with another rescue team composed of seven members and that four of them, including himself, had heard the scratching sound between 2:30 and 3 p.m. while they were in the area where the schoolhouse was believed buried.

He said they were using instruments called Delsar, a life detection device consisting of sensitive microphone probes buried in the ground.

But Esquerro, a member of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines, could not say how far down the scratching sound had come from or if a human being was responsible for it.

A Philippine Air Force officer, who asked not to be named and who was in a separate rescue operation, said the sound need not necessarily indicate human movement.

"It may just be running water or insects," said the officer.

Asked at a press briefing last night if there was still hope of finding survivors, provincial Gov. Rosette Leras emphatically replied: "Of course, that's why we're still here."

She recalled that in similar disasters, like the landslides that hit Quezon province in 2004, four children were recovered alive after 10 days under the rubble.

"Why can't we do that in Southern Leyte, if God wills it so?" she said.

### Under 30 meters of mud

In a phone interview, Hector Reyes, head of the Philippine K9 group involved in the search, clarified that no part of the school building had actually been reached by the rescuers.

Reyes said his team, with the help of three local guides and two dogs, only verified the specific mud-swamped area under which the school had stood.

Reyes said that as per readings made by special instruments brought to the site by another rescue team, the school lay beneath "25 to 30 meters" of earth.

Orilla said the school's location was verified at around 11 a.m. yesterday and that volunteers made several attempts to dig but these only resulted in "cave-ins."

The teams gave up at around 3 p.m.

### 'Please help us, ma'am'

The school's position was ascertained on the same day a local education official showed the INQUIRER "a text message" which she said she re-

ceived last Saturday—or a day after the landslide—from a teacher trapped beneath the rubble.

Erlinda Diaz, district supervisor for the town's 27 elementary schools, said a message in Visayan that registered on her Sony Ericsson mobile phone read (in English): "Ma'am, we are still under the school. Please help us, ma'am. This is Edilio Coquilla. Please ma'am."

Coquilla is a volunteer teacher in the GES pre-school class, she said.

Diaz said she got the message "as forwarded" by the original recipient Delia Prieto, principal of the St. Bernard Central Elementary School. Prieto got the original message at around 1 p.m. Saturday and relayed it to Diaz at around 9 p.m. that same day, Diaz said.

Leras said the thought that children could still be alive under their mud-covered school had kept rescue teams going.

But the search and rescue effort was turning into massive retrieval operation as rescue teams had been unable to find a single survivor. What they found instead were bodies in their muddy graves.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the disaster coordinating center at the municipal hall had reported 72 bodies recovered while 941 were still missing. The number of survivors stood at 415.

About 1,500 people from different barangays were being treated in evacuation centers.

### Mass grave

Twenty-seven bodies that remained unidentified were buried in a mass grave at the public cemetery at 4:30 p.m. yesterday, after health officials raised fears of the spread of diseases if the bodies remained exposed.

"Imagine if we can find them alive, there are over 200 of them trapped inside the school," Leras said. "I asked the people to please help us in praying that these students and teachers are all alive."

### Tunnel planned

People involved in the rescue operation in the area where the semi-concrete school building was buried said they planned to build a tunnel to reach the victims below, believing there were high chances they could find people alive.

The search and rescue team, which included Filipino military groups, emergency response teams, mountaineers and miners, was assisted by American and Malaysian rescue experts.

Aside from Philippine Air Force helicopters, also involved were four Sea Knight helicopters from a US group belonging to the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

### Rains blamed

Capt. Burrell Palmer, public affairs officer of Exercise Balikatan, said the Pentagon and the US Embassy were very much concerned about the situation.

As the government began its investigation into the incident, some survivors and residents of this town still believed it was the constant rains, coupled with a mild tremor, that had pushed the earth down onto their community.

The avalanche left an area of 8 square kilo-

meters covered with mud as deep as 15 meters.

Some survivors told the INQUIRER that after about three weeks of rains, a mild earthquake shook the mountain and the landslide occurred.

Adrian Furgio, regional chief of the Office of Civil Defense, said he was informed yesterday that the national government, through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, would begin its probe of the landslide on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Initially, he said, people at the regional Office of Civil Defense were working on the theory that "because of the rain, water saturated the place and loosened the earth."

He added that another theory was that the earthquake triggered the landslide.

In December 2003, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau warned that this town was among the "geohazard" areas in the country. This was shortly after a killer landslide occurred on Panaon Island, this province.

On the other hand, according to the US Geological Survey, "landslides can be initiated by rainfall, earthquakes, volcanic activity, changes in the groundwater, disturbance and change of the slope by man-made activities, or a combination of these factors."

### Sensors from Taiwan

A life-saving machine from Taiwan was on the way to St. Bernard yesterday.

The equipment can detect movement under the ground and would be very crucial in locating those buried in the mud in Barangay Guinsaugon, officials said.

Rescuers have not been able to use heavy equipment to dig in the collapsed earth because the ground was still soft.

"If there is life underneath, they can be detected by these sensors," Defense Secretary and National Coordinating Council Chair Avelino Cruz Jr. said.

### Rumsfeld's promise

More help was on the way to Barangay Guinsaugon.

Some 40 seasoned miners from the Philippine Mining Safety and Environment Association left Manila yesterday with their ropes and drilling equipment. They had been involved in previous rescue operations in the country.

Cruz said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had promised help.

The Leyte landslide again raised the perennial question of how Divine Providence could allow such a tragedy, more so in a province repeatedly battered by disasters.

Maasin Bishop Precioso Cantillas said: "Even in these most painful times, we believe that God continues to love all of us, especially those who are severely affected."

"While such faith is tested by this disaster, we humbly ask the God of mercy and love to sustain us in our faith and to remain constant in our hope for a better life and even everlasting peace." With reports from Luigie A. del Puerto and Christian V. Esquerro



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# Eusebio open to drug probe

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PASIG CITY GOVERNMENT yesterday promised to cooperate with various national government agencies that have been tasked to look into allegations that city officials were involved in the "one-stop shop shabu restaurants" discovered on Feb. 10.

"They can always come in. We are willing to cooperate," City Legal Officer Carlos Abesamis, speaking in behalf of Mayor Vicente Eusebio, told the INQUIRER.

Operatives of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force raided the shabu dens, where users can rent

paraphernalia and buy illegal drugs, inside a compound of shanties in Sitio Mapayapa in Barangay Sto. Tomas the other week.

Police said the drug compound, just half a kilometer away from the City Hall and the Eastern Police District (EPD), could have been operating for more than a year.

## Rival links mayor to drug dens

Eusebio further drew flak when he demolished the structures, which were considered as evidence, five days after the raid, without coordinating with the national police. His political rival, Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr., the other day even

linked Eusebio to the illegal operations, claiming that a certain "Pacman" was collecting money from the shabu dens for the mayor.

Abesamis, quoting Eusebio, dismissed the allegation as plain "political posturing."

"He (Jaworski) just wants to destroy the reputation of the Eusebio family," he added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales earlier ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the allegations against Pasig officials. The Department of Interior and Local Government will also be conducting a probe into the matter.

"We are open to the investigation. We have the same objective of eradicating drug addiction in the city," Abesamis added.

## Police officials under suspicion

EPD director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela has taken a two-week vacation leave while Pasig City Police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina has been relieved of his post following the discovery of the shabu dens.

Twenty-five other policemen from the district and the city police were relieved and yesterday left for the Philippine National Police Facility in Subic for retraining.

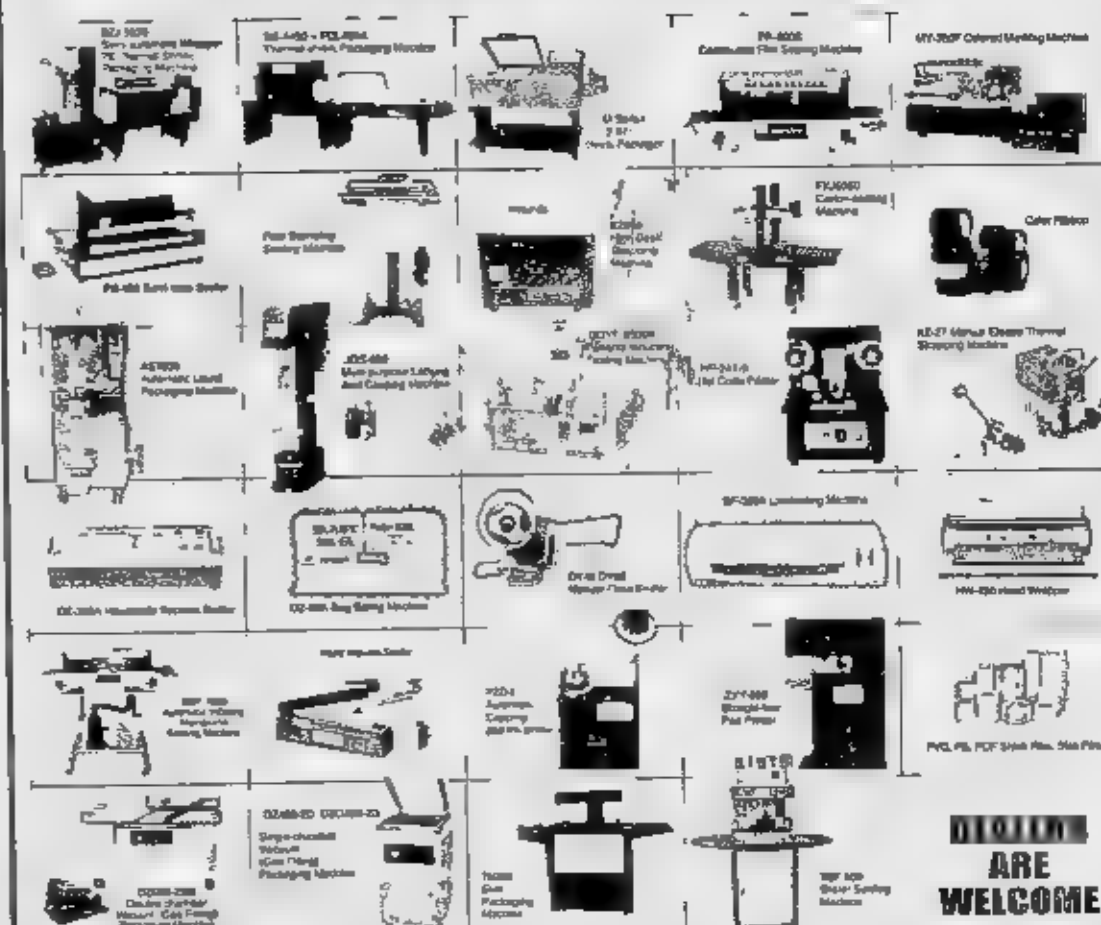


## SHABU DENS

Members of the militant Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamahakaya group stage their own version of the Lovapalooza kissing festival, locking lips with their scaly "tikapia" partners. The unusual public display of affection last Friday was meant to highlight the group's disapproval of the appointment of former Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes as environment secretary.

JOHN BENDOC

## PACKAGING MACHINES ON STOCK DIRECT FACTORY PRICE



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## Special camp for special kids

By DJ Yap

SOME OF THEM WERE AUTISTIC, OTHERS were deaf, while a few were wheelchair-bound, but they danced, frolicked and played like there was no tomorrow, for at Camp Pag-ibig, children will be children.

A special kind of love once again flowed at Camp Pag-ibig, as it celebrated 30 years of giving cheer and hope to hundreds of differently-abled youngsters.

Some 3,000 special kids from Metro Manila and neighboring provinces converged yesterday at the Balara Filter Plant in Diliman, Quezon City, accompanied by their parents and camp volunteers. They played games, swam in the pool, danced, and simply had fun.

## Yearly tradition dating back to 70s

Other activities lined up at Camp Pag-ibig, a yearly tradition in the city that dates back to the mid-1970s, included skills survival training, cooking demonstration and art appreciation lessons.

Quezon City Mayor Penciano Belmonte Jr. served as camp host and honorary chair, a role he has assumed since 2001.

"Camp Pag-ibig is designed to provide chil-

dren with disabilities with opportunities to enhance their socialization skill, paving the way for full integration and participation in the community," organizers said.

Like any camp, tents were set up, with clowns and mascots performing during a fun-filled program. A forum was also held, in which parents talked about their concerns for their children's future.

The activities were planned and designed to make the children remember the two-day festivity for years to come, according to camp director Jorge Banal Sr., Senate Jaycees president.

## Biggest gathering ever

This year's camp was the biggest yet, with some of the delegates coming from special schools in Regions 3 and 4, said co-camp director Erlinda Louarga.

Highlighting this year's Camp Pag-ibig was the blessing and unveiling of a marker describing the camp's history for the past 30 years, followed by a thanksgiving Mass.

Camp Pag-ibig was started in 1976 by the Philippine Association for the Retarded Inc. as the highlight of National Retarded Children Week, as provided for in Presidential Proclamation No. 1385.

## METROBRIEFS

### Jogging protest

GLAD in jogging pants, t-shirts and shorts, more than 50 members of a multisectoral group led by Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador gathered at the Rizal Park early yesterday morning and jogged toward the United States Embassy in Roxas Boulevard to stage a protest against the Balikatan exercises in Jolo, Sulu. "What the Filipino people need is regular exercise that is good for the health and not the Balikatan exercises that give rise to rights abuses and the destruction of the local people's daily lives," Virador said. A small police force guarding the US Embassy gates was taken by surprise by the joggers composed mostly of women and children from Bayan Muna, Solidarity Action Network of Mindanao, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Moro-Christian People's Alliance and the Suara Bangsamoro party.

Margaux C. Ortiz

### Still waiting for justice

NEARLY a year after his death, the family of assassinated Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot is still in the dark about who killed him and why. "We are still waiting for the results of the investigation," Lanot's eldest son, Ken, told the Inquirer yesterday. His father, whose electoral protest against Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio is still pending in the Supreme Court, was shot in the head while eating lunch inside a restaurant in Pasig City on April 13 last year. Lanot's supporters had claimed the assassination was politically motivated but Eusebio, who won over Lanot during the hotly

contested mayoral elections two years ago, denied the allegations.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

### Car owner identified

INVESTIGATORS have identified the owner of a car that figured in the killing of a Laguna Information officer in Makati on Saturday. PO3 Noel Pardinas, case investigator from the Makati Police Department Homicide Unit, said yesterday that follow-up operations have led to the identification of the owner of a black sedan (UHD 418), identified by a witness as the car driven by the man who shot to death Jensen Cristobal, a Sta. Rosa, Laguna public information officer. But while the car owner was automatically considered a suspect in the slay, Pardinas withheld the name, pending further validation. "We are not sure yet whether he still owns the car, because he may have sold it but failed to transfer registration," said the investigator.

### Fake products seized

ABOUT P2 million worth of fake Louis Vuitton and Gucci products were seized during recent raids conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on seven stores in Binondo and Tondo, Manila. NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap said the store owners now face unfair competition charges. The raids conducted on Feb. 8 yielded 5,323 pieces of counterfeit Louis Vuitton bags and wallets, and 2,700 fake Gucci items.

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Recently we've received a flood of emails from potential partners all inquiring about new opportunities in the BPO industry. Here are some of their questions.

**Q:** We are a big manufacturing company in the USA, and export our products to the U.S.A., Australia, Europe, Canada. We heard about your new set up for call centers and our company is interested to know more about it since we would like to have this incorporated in our system—Edith, thru email.

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**A:** Hi A.S. PLDT OnCall can definitely accommodate your expansion requirement. You don't need additional space anymore to house your equipment and you don't need to buy the equipment because we will provide, manage and host the contact center platform for you. Your capex will be greatly reduced. PLDT OnCall personnel will contact you soon to further scope your operations and recommend the most effective set-up for you.



EDSA-I

20

## THE PEOPLE

## Rage with a heart; reality bites Army brats

From page A1

And that was when the haze was lifted. Perhaps nothing in human history can jolt the conscience more than spilled human blood. We rage if blood is spilled in a cold-blooded murder. We rage even more if innocent blood is spilled. From Aug. 21 we knew that life wouldn't be the same again. We now rage, but still had to find the "coeur," or heart in French, to go with it.

And so the rage began. I wasn't an ideologue but appreciated some of the positions taken by the Left. Marxism-Leninism I found unattractive, just like many in my generation. Perhaps it was the fact that the communist revolution has spilled human blood like what the fascists and Marcos did.

## Snap election

In 1985, Marcos called for his snap election. I was in Korea on a student's exchange. I was then a freshman at UP Ateneo, and still free to choose our ideologies and personal beliefs.

1984 and 1985 turned out to be an eye-opener. The opposition won 1/3 of seats in parliament. That they won this much despite widespread electoral fraud attested to the rage that the people felt. The communists, in their inflexible ideology, failed to realize that the people wanted the largely peaceful and nonvio-

lent way to express the rage. We were then just one year short of being able to vote. But we knew that it was just a matter of time.

The 1986 campaign was marked by violence, intimidation, rage and prayer. I remember that someone was collecting signatures for Cory Aquino's candidacy at Palma Hall. I did not sign. In principle, I supported the left's call for boycott.

## Folly of boycott

But soon enough I realized the folly of boycott and decided to support the vote not in a partisan way but to defend the ballot. I told my Dad, now that you have convinced me to cast my first ballot, I have no choice but to defend it. It was too valuable.

Thus on Feb. 7, 1986, I lost my political virginity.

In the poll watch, I carried weapons for self-defense, but the voters' high regard for the nonviolent path impressed me that I eventually dispensed with weapons.

The votes were counted and I had no sleep for days. I went to a Mass celebrated by Jaime Cardinal Sin at Bacalaran Church. This was at the height of the poll count.

## Crunch time

What I clearly remember is a chat with a grandmother after the Mass. I confessed to her that I feared what could happen. She told me, "never to fear or give in. If

you give in, we lose everything."

It was beginning to sound like a Greek Tragedy. We have old women give advice and the young seem about to die. When fraud reared its ugly head and was consummated, the Catholic bishops drew the moral line. On which side should I be? It was crunch time.

I came from ROTC training the day Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos defected. My father told me of the news after I had dismissed my marksmanship platoon.

One of the cadets phoned me that they were at the barricades in front of Crame. A friend called me that the situation was serious. I replied that we were now in a revolutionary situation. This was no longer funny.

The week before, when Marcos' parliament declared him as the winner, my whole gang shouted "rebohasyon." For the first time, I saw fear in my father's eyes. He was not afraid that Marcos' days were over but that many of the members of my generation would die.

Young as we were, we had only romantic notions of "revolution." No doubt the leftist propaganda in UP contributed to our romanticism. Being the good soldier he was, my dad did not say any word on what we said. I told him that some of the cadets were in Crame and that I, as their commanding officer, have to be there.

Once more my father did not say a

word but gave the salute. I put on a blue jacket with a flak vest underneath.

## Army brats

So I had to look for the members of my platoon. I did find them inside Crame with orders to shoot back. These cadets were all army brats, sons of Army officers who had defected to the Enrile-Ramos camp. And the long nights began. The most fearful time was when some helicopter gunships landed. Probably this was it. But it was Gen. Antonio Sotelo's men, who defected to the rebel side.

With the situation relaxed, one of the army brats said that we could take a shower at his dad's quarters at Crame, "for it would be the last time." A priest had given us vaticum the night before. In the morning, I found my Dad looking for me, who ordered the UP cadet squad to "go home."

## Dad's courage

He brought me to General Ramos' office, where we stayed for the day. I then knew how much my father loved me, for it did take courage to put himself in line of possible fire. He was a benedictine combat veteran but going after me still required a lot of courage.

My recollection is now hazy, for I was dead tired, very hungry and wasn't able to take that "last shower." There was an-

other group of other army brats, armed with assault weapons. The situation was still dangerous. I had been trained as a marksman in ROTC and had learned to dissociate my emotion from my weapon.

This is a skill I still have and has served me well in many of life's trials since. After watching the movie "Taps" 20 years later, I now realize that youth can do the unthinkable. Perhaps this is why my dad was fearful. He was in charge of ROTC training in Metro Manila colleges and knew cadet psychology very well.

I distinctly remember General Ramos and Minister Enrile saying prayers before a statue of the Fatima Virgin. I had never seen politicians do this. I then moved to a side room and while watching the TV, I saw Marcos cut from the air. The end was at hand for Marcos and for his pulling the plug off Voltes V, this was revenge on a cold plate!

My Edsa experience was almost totally confined inside an army camp. Unlike my friends and classmates from UP who scaled a TV tower under fire, or who stopped the tanks or wept under tear gas, I just had to keep the cadets in good spirits and to hold their fire.

We were courageous as young people were expected to be. And we waged. It is by God's providence that this rage was not expressed in the violent way, but in a most laudable nonviolent one.

## Emboldened by Johnny Walker

By Reli L. German

IN THE EARLY EVENING OF Feb. 22, 1986, I was at a small birthday party with members of the August Twenty-One Movement (Atom) when news of the rebellion by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos broke out.

Because there was no phone around to confirm the report, we rushed to the Atom headquarters on Pasay Road to call an emergency meeting of the Atom executive committee, including Agapito (Butz) Aquino.

I helped Butz set up Atom after the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, his brother.

## Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, Diokno

Butz then called up Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma and Sen. Jose Diokno who said that Atom should weigh the situation carefully before making any decision.

Shortly after, probably emboldened by the spirit of Johnny Walker (or was it Swing?), Butz decided to go to the scene of the ongoing event.

At around 11 p.m., we heard Butz on the radio declaring Atom's support for the Enrile-Ramos group and asking all anti-Marcos people to convene at Cindy's fast food alongside Iserann department store on Aurora Boulevard in Cubao.

We began to march on Edsa towards Crame and Aguinaldo just after midnight. We were to camp out in that vicinity for the next three days, not knowing what was in store for us.

On Feb. 23, I headed an Atom group of

five that was stationed on Bonnie Serrano Avenue on the side of Camp Crame. Late that night, we got reports that soldiers loyal to Marcos would attack the camps on board tanks and armored vehicles. So we placed garbage cans, rocks, and other stuff to form a barricade on Serrano Avenue.

## Solitary rope

Residents on streets perpendicular to Serrano had already made their own barricades. What was unique was the one on 4th Avenue.

There was nothing on the entrance to the road, save for a solitary rope tied between the Meralco post and a traffic sign on the opposite end.

By early morning, no tanks, no armored vehicles came. I told my group that enemy scouts must have been puzzled (as we were) or intimidated by the rope that was obviously meant to stop their forces from trying to retake the camps.

The entire Atom group was right at the intersection of Edsa and Bonnie Serrano when the news broke out on the morning of Feb. 25 that the Marcoses had fled the country. All of us yelled our lungs out and unabashedly cried in extreme jubilation. The country was finally free.

## 'Butz, you better leave now'

By Rozel Alex M. Santos

**B**UTZ, YOU BETTER leave the place now," Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile told Agapito Aquino, leader of the August Twenty-One Movement, or Atom. "It is no longer safe for you to be around."

Aquino was having an impromptu meeting with Enrile at the Ministry of National Defense in Camp Aguinaldo. I was then an Atom officer. I had gone to Camp Aguinaldo to check out the radio report about the breakaway when I chanced upon Aquino and joined him.

Enrile had requested for the meeting after Aquino telephoned him and offered help. But Enrile abruptly stopped the meeting after an officer showed up with news of an imminent attack. Enrile turned to go to a group of uniformed and stern-looking military officers.

## Bravado

But Aquino, in his usual bravado, declared, "Mr. Minister, we are not leaving you behind. The people together with the Atom members are in Cubao

nearby prepared to come to join you here in Camp Aguinaldo."

Sternly, Enrile exhorted us, almost in command, "Please, leave the place now. You heard what he just reported to me. The situation is dangerous." The officer had reported in a frantic tone that Marcos' forces were "coming to attack us and bomb the place, sir."

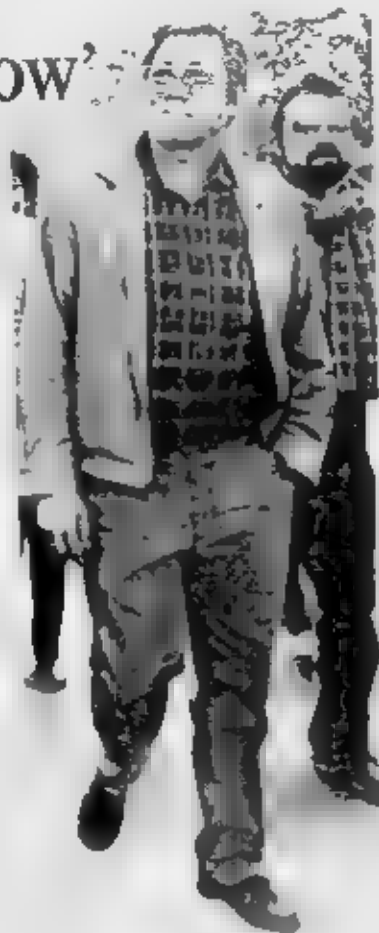
I could feel my hair was all up and I started to feel a big lump in my throat that almost choked me! "Oh Lord! What is this!" I said to myself. I was in terror!

Enrile gave quick instructions to the officers, then proceeded to a news conference of local and foreign reporters.

I urged Aquino to leave the place pronto.

I will never forget how, quite spontaneously, our dialogue went. "Butz, are our Atom companions really waiting in Cubao? With that distinctly Aquino grin, he answered almost in a whisper as he bent over, "ano ka ba, palabas lang natin yon (what are you, it's all for show), but we can call them anytime."

We went back to Cubao and at a telephone booth Aquino started making phone calls, including one to Radio Veritas, where he urged people to gather at Edsa and protect the rebels.



"SHOWTIME" for Butz Aquino.

PH. GARCIA

## The demonstration that never was

By Albert del Rosario

(The writer is now Philippine ambassador to the United States.)

IN THE DAYS LEADING UP to the snap elections in February 1986, it became increasingly clear that Filipinos were determined to reclaim their democracy through the ballot.

The whole world was watching the Philippines then. The Americans joined others in sending an election monitoring mission. Sen. Richard Lugar led the American mission, which included such American political figures as Sen. John Kerry, Sen. Thad Cochran, Congressman Jerry Lewis and Congressman John Murtha.

## US mission

Despite the findings of the American mission, President Ronald Reagan stated publicly his belief that there had been cheating on both sides during the snap elections. This caused a wave of indignation among Filipinos.

In reaction, Jimmy Ongpin, democra-

cy activist and business leader, issued a call for Filipinos like myself, Tony Payumo, Tony Cumagun, and Ben Santos, who had graduated from US schools, to organize a rally.

We were to march to the US Embassy to submit a manifesto protesting Reagan's statement to Ambassador Steve Bosworth. With shirt and tie as required attire, I was designated to personally present our manifesto to the American ambassador in his office.

On Friday, Feb. 21, 1989, Jimmy asked me to advise the Americans of this plan as Steve Bosworth and I were close

friends. When I told him we would be coming, Steve, ever the gentleman, asked me what soft drinks we would like to have served since we would be marching in the heat of the sun.

## Protecting military

The demonstration was organized to include 150 US graduates and had been scheduled for Monday, Feb. 24. However, we were overtaken by events. What would forever be memorialized as the First Edsa Filipino People Power Revolution burst into the open on Saturday, Feb. 22, 1986.

Jimmy Ongpin, Bert Romulo, Tong

Payumo, Tony Cumagun, Ben Santos and I were among the first small groups of civilians that rushed into Camp Aguinaldo that memorable Saturday evening.

Along with our families who immediately followed and kept vigil outside of the camps through the succeeding days, we went there to protect those in the military who had broken with Marcos. We did not know it then, but we would become part of one of the great episodes in Philippine history, even though the rally we ourselves had planned never took place!

## THE MILITARY

From page A1

Camp Aguinaldo to bravely face up to the tanks sent by President Marcos' generals.

Early Sunday morning (Feb. 23) found me and my fellow officers assigned at the RSBS huddled in a meeting in Greenhills, San Juan, where we decided that enough was enough and that Marcos had to go.

I and Col. Reynaldo Reyes, Col. Guillermo Cunanan and Lt. Col. Efrén Abu decided to throw our lot with the Filipino people and the vastly outnumbered rebel soldiers inside Crame and Aguinaldo for we can no longer stomach the excesses of the government.

Armed with my trusty .30-caliber US carbine, I and Colonels Reyes and Abu went inside Camp Aguinaldo before noon of Feb. 23 but not before entrusting our

families to Colonel Cunanan, who was already retired at the time. We trusted Colonel Cunanan to look after the welfare of our families and to tell our tales if anything unwelcome happened to us.

## Surprised

Inside Aguinaldo, I met acquaintances who were surprised but happy to see me. The air inside was electric because of information that artillery and tank units, with their full complement of Marines, were being arrayed against us from all directions.

We were also told that an aerial bombardment was imminent, prompting General Ramos, who was at Camp Crame, to ask Minister Enrile to transfer from Aguinaldo to Crame.

## Goose bumps

I was with Minister Enrile when we

left Aguinaldo to go to Camp Crame on foot via Capinpin Avenue. I had goose bumps when at the gates of the two camps we were mobbed by people whose numbers filled Edsa and adjacent roads as far as the eye can see.

I thought then that, truly, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has metamorphosed into the Armed Forces of the People.

With Gen. Fabian Ver ratcheting up the pressure on us holed up inside Crame with tanks having their big-bore guns trained on us right from the golf course inside Aguinaldo, General Ramos asked us to choose our battle posts.

I decided to join the ground forces of Col. Red Kapunan and, doing a foot soldier's job, proceeded to help guard the rear of Camp Crame where the vehicles of Minister Enrile and General Ramos were located. We knew the tactical im-

portance of those vehicles in case the leaders of the rebel forces had to transfer their base of resistance.

We who were doing rear position defense at Crame already had our fingers on the triggers of our rifles—cocked and ready to go—when we heard what to civilians would have been the frightening heavy drones of attack helicopters.

The choppers reconnoitered one time, surely doing reconnaissance of Crame's defenses, and I told myself that the second time they get over us all hell would break loose.

As it turned out, the helicopters were being "signed, sealed and delivered" by Col. Antonio Sotelo, who then joined over into our side.

## Foot soldier

The rest is history. But as I look back at

those four glorious days when the Filipino people stood side by side with THEIR Armed Forces, I know that I had made a decision that could live up to the high standards I have set for myself.

I was a veritable foot soldier in 1986 during Edsa People Power I despite my rank, but it was a duty to God, country and family which I could not turn my back to. I didn't have to be there, but I chose to be there.

My conviction which will never change is that whether as a rifleman or as a Chief of Staff of the AFP, which I was during Edsa Dos in 2001, a man's contribution to a common cause, no matter how humble, is immeasurable.

I am proud to say to my children and my children's children that in 1986, when the Filipino bucked tall odds to effect change, I was there in Edsa fighting for what I believe was right.



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## Turn to the Experts.<sup>SM</sup>



EDSA-I

20

## THE MILITARY Abadia: Superiors' orders fell on deaf ears

By Fe Zamora

**A**LTHOUGH PRESIDENT FERDINAND MARCOS HAD ANNOUNCED he would not attack the rebels, loyal generals, allegedly prodded by the First Lady, continued to issue orders to decimate the rebels, a former Armed Forces chief said.

But the orders fell on deaf ears as the ground commanders had already lost their will, to fight, said Gen. Lusandro Abadia, who was then Army chief of operations.

According to him, even Imelda Marcos tried to influence the Army to proceed with the counter-attack.

"I told her it was not possible. There were just too many people, (there would be) too many casualties," Abadia said.

Abadia said he was in Cebu when the revolution began. He quickly flew back to Manila the next day.

### Counter-attack

At Fort Bonifacio, Abadia recalled a flurry of plans for a counter-attack, including sending Marines.

Headed by Brig. Gen. Artemio Tadiar, the troops left Fort Bonifacio at 2 p.m. By his reckoning, Abadia said the troops would reach Camp Aguinaldo at 4 p.m. But at 4 p.m., the troops were still at Ortigas and Edsa.

### Sea of humanity

"I told General Ramos that something was wrong. The columns were not moving," he said.

On a helicopter flight, he saw Edsa was crammed with people. Abadia landed at a lot near the Ortigas-Edsa corner, where the troops were stuck.

"When we landed, the people swarmed around us," he said. There, Abadia met with Tadiar.

"I told him, Sir, you stopped. And he said, 'yes, Boy (Abadia's nickname), there are just too many people'."

### Tadiar not willing

"I saw that General Tadiar was not willing anymore," Abadia said.

But two battalions from Tadiar's contingent managed to inch slowly to Camp Aguinaldo via the White Plains road, said retired Brig. Gen. Braulio Balbas.

When no orders came for them to move to Crame, Balbas said he ordered the troops back to Fort Bonifacio.

A new directive to return to Camp Aguinaldo came at dawn on Monday,

Feb. 24, Balbas continued.

### Teargas

To avoid the Edsa crowd, the Marines took the Libis route. At Santolan, they were blocked by a huge crowd that included nuns, priests and students. Using teargas, the Marines briefly dispersed the crowd.

By 7:30 a.m., Balbas said "the machine guns and the mortars were already in place."

Balbas said he received the order at 9 a.m. It came from Gen. Josephus Ramos, the Army chief.

"He said, Balbas, I want you to fire your cannons and report for compliance. I did not say 'yes,' but I told him I was still positioning my cannons, my mortars and the troops," Balbas said.

Balbas said Ramos called again 15 minutes later. But he kept on stalling. Balbas said he tried to talk to Tadiar,

but he had gone back to Malacañang.

"I told him I could not fire at Crame because of the crowd. I recommended to him that we move back to Fort Bonifacio and he acceded," Balbas said.

But the generals at the Army HQ refused to give up, according to Abadia.

### Disobey orders

"We were planning the massive bombardment of Crame, and we were winking at each other," he said. "We understood that we were not going to do it."

In the middle of their planning, Imelda Marcos called.

"She wanted to know how soon we could launch the counter-attack," Abadia said. He replied that it was no longer possible.

## Scout Ranger begs, cajoles to get his commander out of harm's way

By Col. Romeo Y. Lim (retired)

**O**N SUNDAY, FEB. 23, 1986, AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE Scout Rangers, I was summoned to report to the Philippine Army headquarters. I was very surprised when I entered the conference. I was the only colonel in the meeting of generals.

The consensus was for me to bring one company of Scout Rangers to Edsa and open fire to disperse the crowd. My conscience rebelled against these instructions and I decided to stall.

I said I would send my intelligence officer to assist the ground troops.

Then I went back to my office and began to look for Brig. Gen. Felix Brawner II, my commander.

I called the family of General Brawner. I also called Lt. Col. Dunda Matebalao, commander of the Scout Ranger Training Center.

My junior officers were already very restless and itching to go to Edsa to join the anti-Marcos forces. I told them that I needed time to extract General Brawner. I wanted him out of harm's way. I also did not want him to pressure the troops to follow unconscionable orders.

My heart sank when I saw General Brawner on television at the Palace, standing behind the President.

I immediately called up Malacañang and asked to talk to General Ver. I told him that the Scout Rangers were hesitant to follow orders unless they came from General Brawner.

I begged, pleaded and cajoled General

Ver to allow General Brawner to proceed to Fort Bonifacio to join the troops, praying that my bluff would work.

### Ver calls bluff

Ver called my bluff. General Brawner himself rang me to say he was proceeding to the Scout Rangers headquarters.

I contacted Mrs. Brawner and close relatives and Colonel Matabalao and asked them to proceed to headquarters.

When the general arrived, I suggested that it would be better if he instructed the troops to "freeze," that is, not to move in favor of any side.

In an indignant tone, he said this

would be an act of cowardice. I led him to his room, where he saw his wife, relatives and Colonel Matabalao. Except for the colonel, every one started crying. All of them asked him to defer.

Meanwhile, I told the officers that if General Brawner asked who was still willing to fight for President Marcos no one should raise their hand. Sure enough, the general called for a command conference and asked the question. No one raised a hand.

Visibly surprised at the outcome, the general announced he would not go back to Malacañang.

## THE PALACE

## Where's makeup artist?

From page A1

A mainstay of the popular late '60s, early '70s dxHP news team, Rivera said he had been called to the Palace at around 6 p.m. on that lazy Sunday—Feb. 23, 1986—and had taken with him dispatches from Washington to brief the President.

"Why am I going on the air again?" Marcos asked Rivera moments after he was ushered into the President's private room.

### Bongbong opposes

Rivera had just started explaining when Bongbong, wearing jungle fatigues, butted in, "No! Don't go on the air!"

A veteran broadcast journalist and boxing aficionado who had managed such ring greats as World Bantamweight Champion Luisito Espinosa, Rivera continued his briefing. It was essentially that US President Ronald Reagan had threatened to withdraw support if Marcos ordered an assault on the rebel-held camps Aguinaldo and Crame in Quezon City.

"Bongbong was vociferously objecting to the TV appearance of the President while I was trying to explain to him the need for that, based on the wire stories and the radio reports that I had heard," Rivera recounted.

As Bongbong continued his tirade, Marcos turned to his valet and said in the Ilocano dialect: "Can you get the makeup artist? There is something shiny in my forehead."

"I took that as a cue that he was disapproving Bongbong. He was going on the air!" said Rivera.

Rivera went to get the technicians and outside the room came face to face with Bongbong, this time carrying a Galil—the Israeli assault weapon.

### Don't interfere

"He came to me, stopped me short and said, 'Nakikalam ko na namon! Sinabi ko na sa iyo na huwag kang makalam' (You interfered again. I already told you not to meddle)."

"I tried to explain to him. I was pleading. Hindi po. Hindi ho ako nakikalam. Napag-uutusan po lang tayo' (No, sir. I am not meddling, sir. We are just following orders.)"

"No, no, no, no," said Bongbong, then a mop-haired, 28-year-old Army lieutenant.

"All sorts of invectives came out of him," said Rivera. "What I was concerned most was not the viciousness of his tirade, but more on the prospects of being killed. For what?"

After what seemed like eternity, Bongbong mercifully turned around and left him.

"I think that singular incident tells us just who was the real author of what the world hailed as a bloodless revolution,"

said Rivera. "Paradoxically, Bongbong helped in the peaceful resolution of the conflict by not pulling the trigger on that fateful night with me."

The 67-year-old Rivera said he decided to come out with his story for the first time to let everyone know that the People Power revolution wasn't all about the movers and shakers. It was also about bit players whose roles were no less significant.

### It was beautiful

"It was beautiful. Nothing happened after the President went on the air, counseling his soldiers not to move at all, to keep the status quo for the sake of the country," said Rivera.

It wasn't like that at all on the first day of the breakaway on Saturday, Feb. 22, 1986, a day filled with tension and uncertainty.

Rivera said the pall of gloom seemed to have descended upon the Palace a week earlier—when Marcos made a surprise announcement that he had accepted the resignation of Gen. Fabian Ver as Armed Forces chief—a move that stunned Ver.

Marcos had designated Ramos as head of the military. But to Ramos' chagrin, Marcos agreed to extend, on Ver's request, the turnover of command to allow Ver to express his gratitude to the troops in the field.

Curious, Rivera had called Ver to ask why he had resigned. Ver told him, no he had not, but that he had turned in a pro-forma resignation, as a matter of courtesy, following the snap election.

And Rivera had wondered if there would have been any revolution at all had Ramos immediately taken command of the Armed Forces. He recalled that Ramos himself had called Malacañang several times asking when this would happen.

But the day the revolution broke out, there was Ver at the Palace with his son, Irwin, the chief of the Presidential Guards who was unusually clad in full battle uniform, anxiously pacing about.

### Special envoy

The two arrived at the Study Room shortly after Marcos had received US President Ronald Reagan's special envoy, Philip Habib, who had called to report on his observations on the conduct of the snap elections. The meeting, which began at 10 a.m., lasted three hours.

Immediately after Habib left, Rivera went to do his usual task—ask the President what he would like the Malacañang press corps to know about the meeting.

But Ver beat Rivera to the President. The two repaired to a private room and later Ver called Irwin to join them.

When the three emerged 70 minutes later, Marcos told Rivera to prepare a press release simply reporting that his meeting with Habib centered on how he had won



RIVERA WAS THAT close to Marcos. He sets up Marcos for a TV appearance in the David Brinkley show in November, 1985.

the snap election "fair and square."

Rivera went to the press office, unaware that Irwin had reported to the President how he had uncovered a plot by Enrile to mount a coup d'etat on Sunday and that a crackdown against the suspected putschists had begun.

### Hush-hush

"I thought something was amiss. There was a hush-hush atmosphere," said Rivera.

At 3 p.m., he went to the Manila Hotel, where the foreign press types hang out, to try and find out what was going on. He ran into Time photographer Robin Moyers, who told him, "How come your guys are deserting ship now? We're going to Enrile's office. Something's going to be announced."

Close on Moyers' heels came Time correspondent Sandra Burton, who told Rivera, "I can't talk now. I'm rushing. I'll see you later."

Rivera strolled to the coffee bar and saw JV Cruz, the Philippine ambassador to the Court of Saint James. Rivera told him everybody seemed to be heading for Camp Aguinaldo.

"Is that true?" Cruz said.

"If I were you, I'd go back to your post," Rivera said.

Cruz took one big gulp of his scotch, called his driver and proceeded to the airport. "The next thing I knew, he was back in London," said Rivera.

It was then about 4 p.m. I tried reaching the President, trying to figure out

how I could make a sense of it all. I tried to call in the next several hours but couldn't get through. I thought that was unusual. There had never been an instance when my calls to the President had been rejected," said Rivera.

After Enrile announced the breakaway at around 6 p.m. "All hell broke loose," said Rivera.

### Dialysis

Shortly after 8 p.m. Col. Arturo Aruiza, the President's senior military aide, came on the phone and told Rivera that the President was on the line but that he had to be very brief. Rivera summed up what he had learned so far.

Rivera later learned from Aruiza the reason why Marcos was unavailable during those turbulent hours.

"He was being given his usual dialysis, which I understood rendered him incommunicado for at least four hours," Rivera said, revealing for the first time Marcos' condition at that time.

Marcos' kidney problems, the subject of so much speculation, had been a closely guarded secret since 1979.

Even in his book of the Marcoses' escape to Hawaii—"Malacañang to Makiki"—Aruiza was vague on the subject of Marcos undergoing dialysis, saying only that during those critical moments on the first day of the revolution, he could not see Marcos because he was resting under the care of doctors and nurses.

An hour after Rivera had talked on the phone to Marcos, the President went on

national television to announce the capture of the first mutineer. In all, four were shown in public confessing their participation in the aborted coup d'etat.

Apart from the confrontation with Bongbong, the next two days at the Palace were uneventful, from Rivera's perspective, even as word came of massive crowds at Edsa and defections to the rebel side.

At around 2 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 24, a call came to the safe house where Rivera and several other Palace media aides stayed. A member of the kitchen staff said the First Family had made a decision to leave, but Marcos would go through with his inaugural that day.

The decision to depart came after a series of exchanges between the White House and Malacañang with the message that Marcos should step aside—a clear position succinctly relayed by Sen. Paul Laxalt in two early morning phone calls.

That morning, Rivera came to the Palace, and went to see Marcos for his inaugural at the Palace Ceremonial Hall.

"Is everything set? The teleprompter?" Marcos asked Rivera.

Rivera said that tight security outside the Palace had prevented the technician from reporting for work.

### Disappointed

"He looked disappointed. I wanted to make light of it," said Rivera, a man with a sense of humor and a sunny demeanor. In normal times, he could draw a smile from the President. "He had a very solemn face that morning," Rivera said.

Midway through the address, the national television coverage was cut off by a sniper's bullet fired to the Channel 9 transmitter.

"He didn't know about it. The next thing to do was to rush the tape to Channel 9," Rivera said. But fighting had erupted there too.

Marcos went to his Study. "There was no way to make things light. The events totally devastated the man," said Rivera. "A very sad smile creased his troubled face. He looks at me and says, 'I understand there is a large crowd outside the balcony. See to it that everything is set up.'"

Rivera went down to see how the address was being received by the throng that had gathered on the Palace ground.

That was the last time Rivera saw the President at the Palace. The two would meet again months later—this time in Hawaii, where Marcos had gone into exile.

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Editor Teddynic S. Melendres

# Viloria keeps WBC light fly title

## Fil-Am champ survives early Aguirre flurry, wins by unanimous verdict

**LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—**Filipino-American Brian Vilorio retained his World Boxing Council light flyweight title Saturday with a 12-round unanimous decision over Mexico's Jose Antonio Aguirre at the Alladin Hotel and Casino here.

The 25-year-old Viloria, nicknamed Hawaiian Punch, made his first defense of the title he won with a first-round knockout of Eric Ortiz in September.

Viloria spent much of the night fighting against the ropes as he was content to let Aguirre move forward. But the Mexican's offense vanished in the second half of the fight, allowing the champion to pull away.

The Filipino improved to 19-0 with 12 wins inside the distance as judges CJ Ross and Ray Hawkins scored the fight 116-112 and the third, Glenn Thowbridge, saw it 117-111, all in his favor.

"I need tough fights," Vitoria said after the fight. "I need tough rounds. [Aguirre] did his homework and it was a great battle. He took a lot of my punches."



**CHAMPION** Brian Viloria (left) connects with a left to the face of Mexican challenger Jose Antonio Aguirre in the eighth round.

Aguirre, who held the minimum-weight crown from 2000-04, fell to 33-5-1. He has lost three straight fights, including the first two by knockout, at 108 lbs.

He seemed to hurt Viloria in the second round, landing a hard overhand right that backed the champion into a

neutral corner and then following with a right to the body.

Viloria, who entered the ring to the tune of the hit Seventies television series "Hawaii-Five-O," started hot by tagging Aguirre with a big left hook followed by a flurry of punches in the first round.

Aguirre again had Vitoria in trouble briefly in the third round, nearly knocking him down with a big right, but the champion, who traces his roots to Narvacan, Flores Sur, and grew up in Hawaii, managed to hang on.

The punishment Vitoria sustained in the second and third rounds made boxing hero Manny Pacquiao cringe at press row, where he annotated the fight for

Filipino viewers with Quinito Henson  
"Nasasaktan na si Vitoria (Vitoria is  
getting hurt)," said Pacquiao.

Viloria picked up the pace in the fourth round, which he clearly won, after being urged by his American trainer Freddie Roach to go to the body. Throwing and landing more punches, he evened things up with Aguirre.

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## Bulls finish off Giants for PBA crown A30

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# Bulls finish off Giants, put away Fiesta title



PBA commissioner Noli Eala (second from left, front row) congratulates coach Yeng Guiao as the Bulls celebrate their victory.

AUGUSTO BALBUENA

By June Navarro

COACH RYAN GREGORIO VOWED PUREFOODS Chunkee would spring some surprises in yesterday's game. There weren't any. Red Bull put down the defensive clamps in the stretch and got several clutch plays from an array of heroes to finally send the Giants down to their knees, 83-73, and capture the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference crown before a roaring crowd of 10,755 at the Araneta Coliseum.

James Penry was in a zone in the third quarter but solid contributions coming from Mick Pennisi, Cyrus Baguio, Topex Robinson and Finals' Most Valuable Player Lordy Tugade also helped the Bulls clinch their third franchise title since joining the league in 2000.

"There are no ready-made superstars in this

team," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao after snatching his fifth coaching crown overall, putting him in a tie with former Toyota coach Dante Sillverio at sixth place.

"We just developed and bred players using our own system," added Guiao, whose Bulls finished off the Giants in six games, 4-2.

The Bulls took the first two games, the Giants bounced back in Games 3 and 4, before Red Bull wrote *finis* through a pair of scintillating performances in Games 5 and 6.

After winning the 2002 Governors Cup, the Bulls experienced a slide after losing Devonn Harp and Pennisi due to citizenship problems and Jimwell Tiborn's suspension on drug charges.

"We were a championship team before the slide, but the management was committed to re-

building the team," said Guiao, whose five titles were all import-spiced.

Pennisi had big shots in the end, including two three-pointers and a long two, while Baguio, Celino Cruz and Junthy Valenzuela made great stops that rendered the Giants scoreless in the final one minute and 33 seconds.

If there were any changes on the Giants' strategy, it was the extended time on the floor given to veteran Jun Limpot, who played for 27 minutes and finished with 16 points.

**RED BULL 83**—Penry 21, Baguio 13, Pennisi 13, Tugade 11, Villanueva 6, Robinson 6, Cruz 5, Mejorda 2, Fonacier 2, Valenzuela 2, Buga 0, Tiborn 0.

**PUREFOODS 73**—Chandler 24, Limpot 16, Pingris 10, Raymond 8, Yap Roger 8, Yap James 5, Castillo 2, Ellonesio 0. Quarter: 11-24, 36-40, 63-57, 63-73.

## Neo shines as Spring five nails NBC crown

TAGAYTAY CITY—FREE THROWS spelled the difference as Spring Cooking Oil turned back the Pagadian Explorers, 72-71, Saturday to bag the title in the National Basketball Conference's fourth pre-season tournament at the International Convention Center here.

The Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Nac" Padilla trailed 61-66 with 4:23 left but

fought back via conversions from the stripe.

Spring finally took the lead at 70-69 at the 2:17 mark after Gilbert Neo's two free throws.

In the ensuing play, Neo intercepted the Explorers' inbound and went on to score the winning basket unopposed.

Bacchus/Harbour finished third by crushing Tagaytay, 90-77.

## PAL INTERCLUB

# Canlubang grabs Seniors plum; Luisita DQ'd

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

DAVAO—IT WAS A MONUMENTAL LAPSE, not a monumental collapse, that highlighted the shift of power from perennial winner Luisita to Canlubang in the Seniors division of the Philippine Airlines Interclub golf tournament here yesterday.

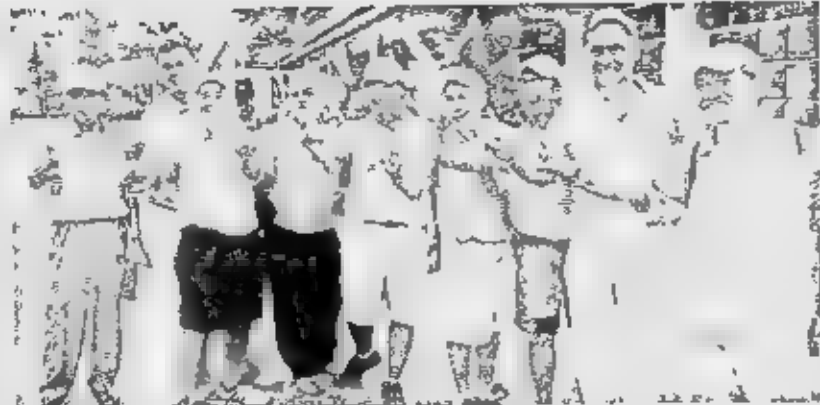
Virtually beyond recall after opening a 20-point lead in the first round, Canlubang still poured it on in the last 18 holes at Apo not knowing that Luisita, which was gunning for a record sixth straight title—and 13th overall—was already out of it due to a rules infraction.

Tournament director Buddy Resurreccion said a check of the records of players fielded in the first round showed that Severo Roxas Chua, who replaced the ailing Alex Montelibano, was not on the original Luisita roster submitted by Iggy Clavercilla during the first team captains' meeting last October.

The penalty for the oversight was disqualification not only for the player but for the entire team as well, according to Resurreccion, who added that the particular rule which Luisita broke has been there since the tournament started 59 years ago.

Ruchie Garcia and Clavercilla, the first two Luisita players Resurreccion informed of the disqualification, gamely accepted the verdict.

"Parey (We're dead)," said PSC commissioner Garcia.



**NUMBER ONE:** Canlubang's greying battlers—(from left), Basco Adriano, Tony Olives, Tony Sarmiento, Bing Buriye, Lino Magpantay, Luigi Yulo, Rolly Viray, Tommy Manotoc and team coordinator Daryl Pascual—show who's No. 1.

"Siyang pala ang kayod namin (Our efforts went for naught)," Seniors rookie and Canlubang manager Luigi Yulo said in jest. Yulo surprised himself and his teammates by leading his squad's 239 output for the day with a tournament-best 53 points.

Backing up Yulo were Rolly Viray (50), Tommy Manotoc (49), Bing Buriye (45) and Tony Olives (42) as Canlubang easily closed the deal even if Luisita's grievous mistake was not discovered.

With the unexpected turn of events, the Laguna-based team savored its first Seniors

victory with a whopping 31-point advantage over Alabang, which was elevated to second place, 485-454.

Manila Southwoods took third with 444. "The future looks good," said Manotoc, who clinched his third straight individual title with a 101 total. He noted that Canlubang mainstays Dave Hernandez and Jose Mia Hechanova are also Seniors-bound soon.

Dethroned and disqualified, Luisita took some consolation in having outscored Canlubang in the last round with a 247 output as former national amateur champion Fran-

cis Gaston marched Yulo's 53 points. Luisita finished with a 473 aggregate.

"Now we go for a championship double," said Yulo, whose team will be gunning to raise its record title harvest to 13 starting Wednesday in the men's Regular tournament which Manila Southwoods won by four points over Canlubang last year.

The monumental lapse proved to be not a monopoly for Luisita, however, as Rounders division stalwart Negros Occidental also got the axe for the same infraction by fielding Luis Coscolluela.

Fi-Am San Francisco was relegated to fourth in Friendship play which was decided the other day due to the same boo-boo.

Wack Wack, starting its club president and Commission on Elections chair Ben Abalos, succeeded Villamor as Rounders champion with a 439 total. Orchard was second with 426 while Cebu Country Club grabbed third at 424.

Negros would have finished second in the division with its 433 aggregate.

Lanang topped the Sportswriters Division pulling away with a 425 total. Pacay nipped Maharlika for second place—based on the score of their sixth player—after they had finished tied at 404.

This year's edition has Action Asia, Airbus, Boeing, GE Aviation, GMA 7, Honda Cars Davao, INQ7.net, Joey 92.3, Royal Caribbean International, PACCOR, People

Asia, Premier Wine and Spirits, Rudy Project, UMBN and Uraya Land Development Corp. as major sponsors.

ABS-CBN International, Fortune Tobacco and Radio Mundaño Network are the corporate sponsors while 96.3 Wrock, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Honda Megamotors, SM City Davao and Tanday Rhum are the minor sponsors.

The final standings:

**CHAMPIONSHIP**—Canlubang 485 (246-239); Alabang 454 (226-228); Manila Southwoods 444 (225-219); Lumbia 361 (185-176); Fi-Am Sydney 272 (139-133); Ang Tay 261 (151-110).

**FOUNDERS**—Wack Wack 439 (227-212); Orchard 426 (214-212); Cebu 424 (218-206); Valley 422 (207-215); Villamor 421 (220-201); MAGC 414 (207-207); SFO Crystal Spring 410 (208-202); Riviera 410 (205-205); Aguilera 402 (187-205); Pueblo 398 (207-191); Camp Evangelista 386 (194-202); Mofo 387 (182-205); Eagle Ridge 368 (188-180); Alta Vista 358 (188-172).

**SPORTSWRITERS**—Lanang 425 (188-237); Pacay 404 (183-221); Maharlika 404 (200-204); Davao City 398 (189-210); Apo 369 (185-214); Hawaii Hi-Am 368 (184-209); Rancho Palos Verdes 362 (185-207); Team LA 360 (187-203); Baguio 359 (174-215); Navy 356 (176-210); Texas Golf 368 (175-193); Macan Coral 363 (186-195); Bacolod 360 (164-196); Club Intramuros 359 (164-195); Villamor 348 (155-183); Fi-Am Florida 343 (163-180); Sierra Plantation 340 (154-186); Zamboanga 329 (144-185); UP Ties Juts 329 (157-172); Iligan 325 (155-170); San Juanito 307 (139-168); Club Filipino 302 (140-162); Colabato 301 (135-165).

## Once in a hundred years

HERMIE Rivera, the boxing man, calls this a lost message.

He filed it from Las Vegas where he covered Manny Pacquiao's historic rematch with Mexico's Erik Morales last month.

The good news is that we've finally retrieved the dispatch from our e-mail. Actually, Hermie should be busy filing a post-mortem on Brian Viloria's latest fight.

Late as it is, we keep this promise to share with readers a good portion of Mr. Rivera's recovered dispatch.

A HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS WAGERED on Manny Pacquiao can bring in one hundred (\$100) while one hundred-five crisp US notes placed on Erik Morales give a hundred-dollar return.

But don't go knocking on your neighbor's doors betting your carabao just you look foolish and dumb if you wind up making the wrong bet. (You can bring in the mascot with its apt comments.)

Meanwhile, more Latinos are expressing preference for the man called "Pacman" as he gears up for his showdown with the terrible Tijuana Mex.

It is probable that boxing aficionado (Mexican-American) Raul Rodriguez, a respiratory therapist at Washington Township Hospital in

## BARE EYE



## Recab Trinidad

Premont, California, just got swept up with the Pac Mania he's picking Pacquiao to beat Morales.

Said Señor Rodriguez: "I grew up in East Los Angeles watching the likes of Ruben Olivares, Salvador Sanchez and Julio Cesar Chavez. My dad used to take me to the Forum to see a good scrap. It would have been fun seeing those guys with Manny."

"Pacquiao is right up there with them in terms of fire, fury and brilliance. I'm picking Manny Pacquiao to beat Erik Morales because of motivation. You cannot help admire a guy carrying the pride and honor of 80 million Filipinos."

"In many ways, Manny emulates what Filipino-American workers are known for—hard work, talent and determination."

"His blood and guts are to be admired especially after firing back at Morales despite being cut in the fifth round the last time they met."

"Manny is the hunger, faster and younger fighter of the two combatants. Speed kills and that's what Manny should employ to beat the great Morales."

"I've seen all of Manny Pacquiao's fights through PPV and DVD's my buddy Emmanuel Rivera gives me and I just like the guy. And Pacman gives great interviews."

"A good example that he is his own man is that he doesn't rely on translators to express himself on national television. He took initiative in learning English."

Thanks, amigos. Ironically, nationalism sells in boxing. It is special to hear one Mexican aficionado root for a fistic treasure like Pacquiao. A national treasure, indeed. And also very, very rare.

"Manny Pacquiao comes once in a hundred years and I'm happy for the Filipino people. He has elevated not only boxing but his fellow Filipinos in terms of worldwide recognition," Rodriguez concluded.

However, the Arville brothers, John Jr. and Raymond, certified Pacquiao supporters—cautioned Manny to have at least 11 rounds of fistic brilliance in order to topple Terrible Erik.

As it would turn out, Pacman needed only 10 ferociously fought rounds to fashion out the biggest win of his checkered career.



MONTEBON: Return trip to finals



ARIAS: Happy to vie in home race

## Montebon, Arias top Dumaguete Milo run

DUMAGUETE CITY—VETERAN runners Rolan Montebon and Merlita Arias yesterday topped the 23rd National MILO Marathon 21K elimination races to book a return trip to the finals in December.

Montebon wisely paced himself for the first 20 kilometers before making his move against early leader Mendel Lopez.

"I [Montebon] caught up with me near the finish line," Lopez, who settled for second place, five seconds behind, said in Filipino.

Aside from berths to the National Finals on Dec. 10 in Metro Manila, Montebon (1:15:32) also won the top purse of P10,000 while Lopez (1:15:37) pocketed P6,000.

Montebon, of San Jose, Negros Oriental, and Lopez of Sta. Catalina

town used to run in the Cebu City legs of the foot race held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Munias, Adidas, Cebu Pacific and Powerbar and were glad to race in their home province.

Montebon's University of Cebu, pal Miljone Luerte (1:17:50) will also advance to the finals for placing third.

The 32-year-old Arias, a consistent finalist since the 18th Mito Marathon, clocked 1:34:45 to rule the women's 21K.

Placing second was Medelyn Carter in 1:49:13, with Juvelyn Magnate third in 1:59:38.

Top three finishers in the 5K fun run. Men—Revend Aranas, Armando Pabuya, Gervanta Besin; Women—Eden Renancia, Dhona Nuelisa Abrenic, Jennifer Montero

## Viloria keeps WBC light flyweight belt

From page A29

Viloria turned the fight around by getting off the ropes. He hit the charging Aguirre with a pair of hard rights to start the seventh, then began a pattern that lasted the rest of the fight.

The Filipino, a former US

Olympian, gave Aguirre a particularly bad bending in the 11th round when he caught him with a big right to the nose that quickly drew blood from the Mexican's nostrils.

The victory gave Viloria more incentive to go after WBC interim

flyweight champion Jorge "El Traveso" Arce, the trashy but popular Mexican who has indicated his readiness to fight the Filipino in the undercard of the third Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales showdown on Sept. 16.

In the other championship bout, Mexico's Antonio Margarito retained the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown, stopping compatriot Manuel Gomez in the first round. Salven L. Logunday, Contributor, Inquirer wires



## MALAYSIAN OPEN Korean Wi bags title; Miñoza fades away

KUALA LUMPUR—KOREAN CHARLIE WI SAavored the proudest moment of his career after sealing a one-stroke victory in the rain-affected Malaysian Open on Sunday.

The Philippines' Frankie Miñoza, on the other hand, saw his campaign fizzle with a 74 that dropped him way below the final leaderboard.

Wi, 34, birdied the last hole to complete a nine-under-par 63 at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club and finish at 19 under par, one ahead of Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee in a tournament reduced to three rounds.

Miñoza had a triple bogey on the par 3 third hole and never recovered after that, finishing in a tie for 63rd-67th places with a 212.

"I'm really speechless as coming here to Malaysia, I wasn't expecting to win, as I was home last week and I had no idea I would make so many putts like I did today," Wi told reporters.

"God was looking out for me today as I got a lot of good breaks and then Thongchai misses his putt on the last hole which really helped me win this championship," he added.

"But this win is definitely the biggest win of my career and the proudest moment in my career."

Jaidee, looking to become only the sixth player to win a tournament in three successive years, carded a closing 66.

He had the opportunity to force a playoff but failed with a 20-foot birdie putt at the last hole to miss his chance. **Reuters**

## Sisters act helps lift Highlands

SISTERS LINNEL AND ANGELA DE VILLA powered defending champion Tagaytay Highlands to a 2-1 victory over Manila Southwoods recently in the Ladies Federation Golf League action played out in various courses.

Linnel teamed up with Parah Imperial to win the high-low point while Angela played with Maline Flores and won the aggregate duel.

Connie Campos and Glo Domingo took the foursomes for Southwoods.

Alabang and Forest Hills finally broke into the win column pulsating 2-1 triumphs over their respective opponents.

Alabang downed Sta. Elena while Forest brought Riviera back to earth with a win that ended the latter's back-to-back wins with bonus points.

After Lorna Tabuena and Olive Pizarro claimed the foursomes for Alabang, the two other matches ended in a tie with Filipina Gornes-Christine Nardoo figuring in a standoff with Alice Jose-Nancy Co and Vernie Oledan-Vivian Chua also splitting the point with Lily Chan-Nancy Ortega.

Winning the match for Forest Hills were Violy Peges-Lily Young and Nelda Roguel-Marich Ojeda.

Visiting Wack Wack sustained its hot streak after a hard-earned 2-1 victory over Royal Northwoods of Buacan.

## Little man soars high

New York's  
5-foot-9 guard rules  
slam-dunk contest

HOUSTON, TEXAS—NATE Robinson won the Slam Dunk Contest Saturday, and Dirk Nowitzki triumphed in the Shootout, part of the National Basketball Association festivities leading up to Sunday's All-Star Game.

A rookie guard on the New York Knicks, Robinson needed a dozen chances in a bedeviling Philadelphia 76ers swingman Andre Iguodala, who put home one of the most difficult and imaginative dunks in the 23-year history of the event.

Robinson, diminutive by NBA standards at 5-feet-9-inches, was inspired by the victory 20 years ago of 5-foot-7-inch Spud

Webb, who advised Robinson prior to the contest and helped him convert a dunk in the second round.

Standing in the lane, Webb bounced a pass to a charging Robinson, who soared over Webb and put down a one-handed hammer for a perfect score of 30.

Both Robinson and Iguodala totaled 94 on the final round and went to a one-dunk tiebreaker. Robinson required a dozen tosses that included three missed dunks before finally putting home a dunk that began at halfcourt with an underhand toss off the backboard and ended with him putting the ball through his legs before the slam.

Needing a 47 to tie, Iguodala tried a between-the-legs reverse along the baseline, missing one before converting. He came up one point short, prompting All-Star teammate Allen Iverson to playfully shout,

"We were robbed!"

Iverson assisted Iguodala on his second dunk of the first round, one of the most memorable in the history of the event.

Iverson stood behind the backboard with the ball while Iguodala began off the deep corner out of bounds. Iguodala took an angular approach toward the backboard as Iverson threw the ball softly off the back of the backboard.

Almost impossibly, Iguodala caught the carom in mid-air, remained aloft as he soared below the rim and threw in a reverse dunk that seemed to defy gravity.

In the Shootout, Nowitzki, perhaps the best shooting big man in the history of the



NOWITZKI: Three-point champ **AP**

game, joined Larry Bird, Glen Rice and Peja Stojakovic as the only forwards to win in the 21-year history of the event.

A revolutionary power forward for Dallas and a Most Valuable Player candidate this season, Nowitzki was steady but not spectacular in draining his deep shot. His final-round score of 18 matched the lowest since 2000.

After Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas opened

the final round with a score of 16 points, Nowitzki began by making four on his first rack of balls from the right corner—a spot from which he rarely shoots during games—and remained even throughout the round, sinking three on his final rack. **AP**

## Davis writes Winter Olympics history

TURIN, ITALY—SHANI DAVIS CREAT ed Winter Games history on Saturday before the specter of doping again hit the Olympics.

Davis became the first black to win an individual gold medal at a Winter Olympics, combining with Joey Cheek in an American one-two finish Saturday in the 1,000-meter speed-skating final.

Soon after Davis completed his victory, Italian authorities raided the residences of Austrian biathlon and cross-country staff in the Alps looking for banned substances and the IOC sanctioned random drug tests on a number of Austrian cross-country and biathlon athletes.

Alfred Eder, a trainer for the Austrian biathlon team, said more than a

dozen police searched and interviewed athletes for four hours.

"We are very angry," Eder said. "It is not very gentlemanly."

It was a day of firsts in the Alps, with Kjetil Andre Aamodt becoming the first man to win the same Alpine event at three Olympics, and Janica Kostelic becoming the first woman to win four Olympic Alpine gold medals. **AP**

## Interpreting the Interpreter

By Percy D. Della

SIX MONTHS INTO EARLY RETIREMENT, I am back in California state service as a "retarded" annuitant or retired "irritant," take your pick—to work on a project for Arnold's army.

This gig through June is with Mr. Schwarzenegger's energy advisers. My job is to help make his energy policies crystal clear to the electorate, I mean the people. After a bruising first term, Conan the Republican has announced he'll run again for governor of the Golden State.

Mother nature has been fickle here of late. The calendar says winter, but the weather's been spring-like, confusing the flowers to bloom ahead of time.

Anyway, kababayans hungry for news from home come up to me in parks, at the bus stop, in restaurants, etc. The hottest item on their plate is, you'll never guess it—Manny Pacquiao and his expanding posse of admirers.

The one member of Manny's planet who seems to cause all the curiosity is someone named Joe Ramos.

Mr. Ramos does not cook Manny's meals, clean his plate, drive his car or make his bed when the Pacman arrives in Los Angeles.

### COMMENTARY

According to news reports and column items, he is supposed to be the Filipino champion's interpreter. As Pacquiao's purse has expanded of late, so has Joe's clout in Manny's camp.

On payday after his triumph over Erik Morales in their encore fight, Pacquiao rewarded Joe with a kingly sum of \$50,000.

Such a windfall makes Joe one of, if not the highest paid interpreters on the planet.

The American Interpreters Association estimates there are 12,000 to 15,000 interpreters and translators in the United States. Many of them earn \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually—making Joe's one-time paycheck something to shoot for in their lifetime.

But the sporting world knows that Manny has been freelancing, been doing his own interpreting. He has taken excessive liberties with the King's language of late.

Meantime, where has Joe been, sleeping on post, or doing other chores?

I can almost hear, an editor friend should he get the chance to confront Mr. Ramos.

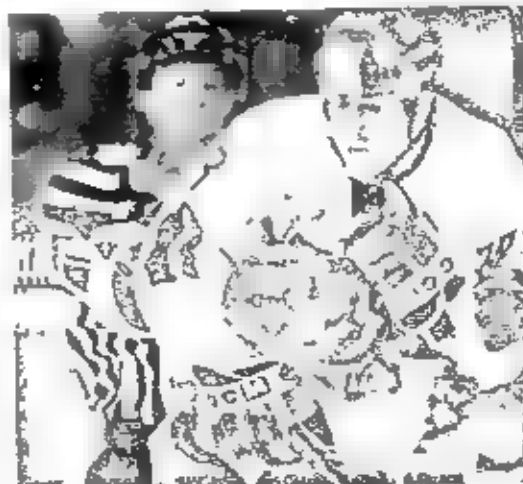
The friend's query would be short and sweet: "Joe, ano ba talaga ang agimat mo?" (Joe, what sort of talisman have you got?)

Well, we would rather leave the Ramos follow-up to other interested parties, gossip columnists included.

Sports Note: Is it really necessary to impose the WBC international super featherweight title on a bantamweight fighter like Pacquiao? Is he aware that each time he comes out to box sporting that belt, the WBC deducts a substantive sum as sanction fee? A friend in the know says this is one of the greatest perjuries since the sale of the Brooklyn Bridge more than once by con artists in various eras.

## Nissan golf: Rory still up

LOS ANGELES—RORY SABBATINI MADE A five-foot bridge on the 18th hole Saturday that allowed him to finish the day the same way he started—with a four-shot lead in the Nissan Open and in total command of his game. Sabbatini shot a 67 and was at 14-under 199. Fred Couples had a 65 and was tied for second with Craig Barlow, who shot 67. "I'm comfortable with the lead," Sabbatini said. Despite making the cut, Tiger Woods withdrew with the flu, the first time in his pro career he has left in the middle of the tournament for health reasons. **AP**



MARTIN Straka (top) of Czech Republic fights with Jarkko Ruutu of Finland during the ice hockey men's preliminary round Czech Republic vs Finland at the 2006 Winter Olympics at the Palasport Olimpico in Turin. Ruutu had earlier rammed into Czech Jaromir Jagr, knocking the NHL star to the ice bloodied. **AP**

## POC did not blink in cage row—Cojuangco

SAYING THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC Committee is not singing a different tune, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said in an interview the other day that "nothing has changed" in the country's bid to regain membership in the Fiba (International Basketball Federation).

"We are following the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fiba and POC which requires that the five basketball stakeholders (PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and former Sen. Joey Lina, president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines), form a new and unified association on or before the March 31 deadline. Right now, we're on track. There's no problem."

Dispelling rumors that the POC has "softened up," Cojuangco said "nothing has changed." He added that once the new association's Constitution and by-laws is finalized by the five stakeholders by next week, the new cage body would seek recognition from the POC general assembly to become the newest national sports association for basketball. Whether or not

### CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Inigo



the name BAP would be maintained, if only for its sentimental or historical value, or a new one would be adopted is left to the discretion of the stakeholders.

My sources, however, said there could be a legal problem in using the name BAP because veteran basketball man Nic Jorge owns the legal right to the name Basketball Association of the Philippines Inc. He is ready to go to court if anyone messes with it, my sources added.

The embattled BAP was expelled last June from the local Olympic body by 33 members of the POC general assembly. In voting for the BAP's ouster, the assembly said the national sports association for

basketball did not only show disrespect to the POC by reneging on an agreement, but it was concerned with the embarrassing performances of BAP-supported national teams in recent years.

After the BAP was expelled, the Philippine Basketball Federation was formed to take its place and was recognized by the POC. While the expulsion of the 70-year-old BAP did not sit well with some basketball diehards, many say the POC should not be faulted for its move. The BAP has only itself to blame for its misfortunes.

Even former basketball official and now Cebu Rep. Eduardo Guillas once urged the BAP "to accept its expulsion from the POC and give the PBF all the room to perform its duty as the new governing body for Philippine basketball." A BAP vice president for the Visayas during the administration of two-time Fiba president Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat and former coach of the multi-titled UV Lacers, Guillas was earlier tapped to head the PBF but he begged off citing old age and his duties in

Congress. In his place, Maunilio "Moying" Martelino, a longtime secretary general of the Basketball Confederation (ABC), was elected unopposed.

In the aftermath of the BAP's ouster from the POC, Fiba suspended the Philippines from all international cage tournaments under its aegis, including last year's 23rd Southeast Asian Games, where the Filipinos were the defending men's cage champions.

However, Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann said the Philippines could still regain its Fiba membership by forming another cage body on or before March 31.

"I'm confident the five stakeholders would get the job done and meet the March 31 deadline," Cojuangco said.

The BAP was expelled from the POC for reneging on an agreement it forged with the POC regarding the formation of a well-trained national team following the humiliating setbacks suffered by the Philippines in recent years.

## JVC badminton Cebu regionals kick off April 3

THE JVC BADMINTON REGIONAL CIRCUIT BEGINS April 3 in Cebu City with Pampanga, Davao and Bacolod hosting the three other legs.

The four-stage swing stakes not only cash prizes but also berths in the JVC Open Badminton Champi-

onships slated in Manila in July.

The JVC regionals, sponsored by JVC, Victor (exclusively distributed by Prime Industrial Sales), Lac-tacyd and Bingo Bonanza and backed by The STAR, Pinoy Exchange, Pioneer, Sunboks, Alaska and Cebu

Holiday Spa, is now accepting registration.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

## Stick to issues—Martinez

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"LET US STICK TO THE MAIN ISSUES," SAID Leo Martinez, director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP), referring to the ongoing word war involving himself and Vicente del Rosario, presidential consultant for the entertainment industry, Edu Manzano, Optica Media Board (OMB) chief, and Jacky Ahenza, Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) chair.

Martinez has accused Del Rosario of sabotaging the new Sharing Scheme for the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2005 funds—cutting down the shares of the FAP and Motion Picture Anti-Piracy Council and allotting 20 percent each to the OMB and the FDCP.

"I will not be distracted," Martinez vowed. "I am still waiting for an explanation of the legal and ethical implications [of the reallocation] Funds from local government units cannot be funneled back to national government offices like the OMB and the FDCP, which already receive funding through the General Appropriations Act."

FAP head says his quarrel is with Vic del Rosario, not Edu

Martinez insisted that Del Rosario should do the explaining, "not his cronies Manzano and Ahenza."

### Dictator?

"Is he a dictator?" Martinez said "Why is he saying that he didn't need to consult the FAP [on the matter]?"

As for the raging controversies involving OMB, Martinez shrugged, "That's [Manzano's] problem. This is not between him and me."

Both Del Rosario and Manzano have implied

STICK/A2-5

## Michiko, 'Maxi,' 'Magnifico'!

CHEER FACTOR

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

### TRIPLE TRIUMPHS

A day after 10 pictures "Ang Pagdadaigang ni Maximo Oliveros" won the Teddy for Best Feature Film at the Berlin International

Film Festival, more good news followed: It was also declared Best Film by the International Jury of Kinderfilmfest and Second Best Film by the Children's Jury.

The Teddy is for gay-themed

MICHIKO/A2-5

time for you to shine!

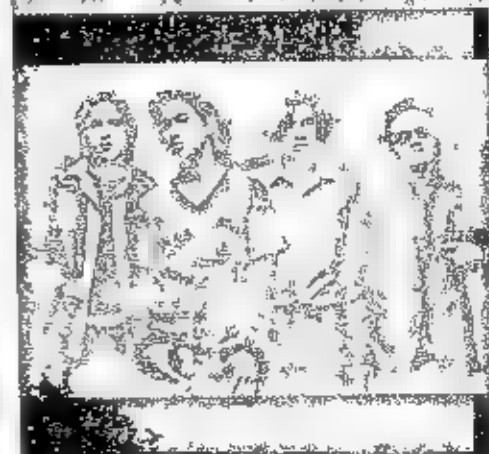
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GB3	1 PINK PANTHER 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 9:45	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:10		
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**ROUNDUP**

**Pinay in US dance finals**

**CHERYL** Bautista Burke, a Fil-Am based in New York City, joins grand finalists in "Dancing with the Stars," seen live on Thursdays over US cable TV ABC 7.

Cheryl and her celebrity partner, singer Drew Lachey (Nick's brother) of the band 98 Degrees are among the four teams (picked out of 10) who will battle it out during the grand finals on Feb. 23. Cheryl and Drew scored high in tango, samba, *pasa doble*, quickstep and cha-cha.

The plucky Pinay grew up in San Francisco, California. Her mother Sherri Bautista Burke, a native of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, has been featured in "Good Morning America," as a successful Asian entrepreneur.

Cheryl, 22, started ballet lessons at age 4. At age 10, she discovered ballroom dancing and started training in standard dance and Latin. She started competing abroad at age 13. She emerged champion at the 2005 World Cup Professional Rising Star.



**CHERYL** Bautista Burke with Nick Lachey's brother Drew

McGregor will croon Sade's "The Sweetest Gift" and dramatic actor Irons will sing Bob Dylan's classic "To Make You Feel My Love."

Other stars taking part in the venture, to be recorded by Rhino Records, include Jennifer Garner, Eric McCormack, Lucy Lawless and John Scamos.



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**REGINE** Velasquez, Pops Fernandez, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Kuh Ledesma

**Back in Greenhills**

**KUH** Ledesma is back in Greenhills, San Juan, with Teatrino ("small theater") at the Promenade, the newest shopping and dining destination.

Teatrino is very similar to Ledesma's former place, Music Museum—but smaller, with a seating capacity of only 28, and therefore more intimate. The singer-entrepreneur adds, "It also has a bigger stage and a state-of-the-art sound and lighting system."

Teatrino formally opened last month with Ledesma onstage, with friends Zsa Zsa Padilla, Pops Fernandez and Regine Velasquez.



**NICK** Lachey and Jessica Simpson

**Needy ex**

**LOS ANGELES**—Nick Lachey is seeking spousal support from his divorcing wife Jessica Simpson, and he wants his jewelry back.

In court papers filed Friday in response to Simpson's Dec. 16 divorce filing, Lachey cited irreconcilable differences for the dissolution of the three-year marriage.

Lachey, 32, also asked for "miscellaneous jewelry and other personal effects," his earnings and accumulations from and after the date of separation and other, to be determined assets.

Lachey said he and Simpson, 25, separated Dec. 13, although she claims it was Nov. 23.

The couple, who starred in their own MTV reality show, "Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica," had no prenuptial agreement. Lachey, who gained fame as a member of the boy band 98 Degrees, had more earning power when the couple wed in October 2002. However, Simpson's fame skyrocketed during the marriage. The 25-year-old singer-actress reportedly earned more than \$30 million last year. AP

**Singing actors**

**LOS ANGELES**—Hollywood stars Jeremy Irons, Scarlett Johansson and Ewan McGregor are among 14 actors who are breaking into song for an unusual, celebrity-studded music album, producers said Wednesday.

The actors have agreed to explore their alternative talents on "Unexpected Dreams: Songs from the Stars," an album aimed at helping a musical education program of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

"Lost in Translation" and "Match Point" star Johansson, 21, will sing the George and Ira Gershwin classic "Summertime," Scotsman

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## Upbeat developments on the Filipino film front

SOME PEOPLE THINK I'M A COCKEYED OPTIMIST for stubbornly declaring that, despite the Filipino movie industry's poor showing last year, we're in for better film times in 2006.

Well, early evidence may prove us right. Here it is, only February, and Star Cinema has already released two new films.

If the studio keeps this pace up, it could come out with one new movie each month, totaling 12 for 2006—from one movie company alone. That's a lot, especially when compared with last year's meager output.

One of the big movies that Star Cinema is heralding is the film bio of boxing idol Manny Pacquiao, with Jericho Rosales portraying the title role. The film will be co-produced by FLT.

Other studios' productions that have been announced include a Camille Prats starrer and an "Agent X-44" spoof for Vhong Navarro.

Regal Entertainment is also revving up for a busy year. Its first movie for 2006, "I Will Always Love You," is reported to have grossed P50M on its first week, which makes it a certified hit.

Other Regal movies in the works include Katrina Halili's launching vehicle as a sexy star, which the studio is co-producing with GMA Films.

Co-productions seem to be the way to go this year, after their success in the 2005 Metro filmfest.

This is one way that cash-strapped producers can bankroll expensive productions that will draw viewers back to theaters showing local movies.

But budget productions can still be expected to dominate the local filmmaking scene, as the digital trend continues to generate more adherents.

The 2006 Cinemaya alternative filmfest has already chosen the digital feature projects that will each be given a seed grant of P500,000 for showing by the middle of the year.

And the Cinema One movie channel will fund seven more digital features, with a total production grant of P700,000 each. This year, the channel is looking for movies about the Filipino family.

These upbeat developments show that there are enough people out there who haven't resigned themselves to melodramatically and mawkishly mourning the "death" of Filipino movies, and are prepared to work hard to help energize them back to dynamic life.

Why not join this more upbeat group by supporting their efforts with your patronage?

Even if you don't like some of the local films you watch, your consistent patronage—and constructive criticism—will be important components in the Filipino movie industry's long-awaited "resurrection."

### Catherine Deneuve

It's great to hear that the 2006 Bangkok Inter-

national Film Festival (Feb. 17-27) will honor French actress Catherine Deneuve with its Golden Kinnaree Career Achievement Award for her contribution to cinema.

The presentation will be made during the festival's Award Gala on Feb. 24 at the Conrad Hotel.

Deneuve is known for her work with international film directors. She came to worldwide prominence in 1964 in Jacques Dewey's "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg." The film will be screened at the Bangkok filmfest in a special festival presentation on Feb. 21.

Nominated for an Academy Award in 1992 for performance in "Indochina," Deneuve has won France's Cesar Award for "The Last Metro" and "Indochina." Baffa also honored her work as Best Actress in Luis Buñuel's 1967 masterpiece, "Belle de Jour."

Deneuve's other exceptional movies include "Repulsion," by Roman Polanski, "Tristana" by Buñuel, "Mississippi Mermaid" by Francois Truffaut, and "Dancer in the Dark" by Lars von Trier.

Liberated and independent in her private life, Deneuve had a child by Roger Vadim in 1963 and another by Marcello Mastroianni in 1972, but did not marry either one of them. Her marriage to British photographer David Bailey ended in divorce.

Even in her 60s, Deneuve is an exquisite beauty aloof and detached in manner but vital in some of her films. She was par-

ticularly effective as the frigid, mentally disoriented character in "Repulsion," the conniving 18th-centu-

ry virgin in "Benjamin," and the erotic, enigmatic protagonist in "Belle de Jour" and "Tristana."

### VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

### SHANG CINEPLEX

<b>1 PINK PANTHER</b> MTRCB: GP 12:40, 3:00, 6:20, 7:40, 10:00	<b>8 EIGA SAI 2006</b> 2:00, 5:00, 8:00
<b>2 AEON FLUX</b> MTRCB: R-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	<b>4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN</b> MTRCB: R-18 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00

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<b>1 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN</b> 11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 7:45, 10:40 R-18	<b>2 PINK PANTHER</b> 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 GP
<b>3</b> 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 11:00 R-13	<b>4 GOAL</b> 1:10, 3:40, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 GP

### POWER PLANT

DIGITAL

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City  
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

<b>AEON FLUX</b> R-13 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15	<b>FIREWALL</b> PG-13 12:10, 2:35	<b>CLOSE TO YOU</b> GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
<b>BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN</b> R-18 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20	<b>GOAL</b> GP 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15	<b>PINK PANTHER</b> GP 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15

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Butler and Simon are a happy couple called in Bangkok. Together and sharing his dreams Butler goes to work. In an open land and rural atmosphere Simon gets large by getting into business. At the present the movie is still being shown. Their business brings them together and opens a passion shared by them. Subsequently they meet each other and Simon's behavior after begins to show off. Inhabited by the deteriorating state of his marriage. Butler expresses anger. And his way thinking leads to dominating results for both of them.

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MURDER

SARAH GONZALES

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

## MOVIE GUIDE

### NOW SHOWING

<p><b>1</b> <b>AEON FLUX</b> R-13 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15</p> <p><b>2</b> <b>BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN</b> R-18 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b>FIREWALL</b> PG-13 12:10, 2:35</p> <p><b>4</b> <b>GOAL</b> GP 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15</p> <p><b>5</b> <b>PINK PANTHER</b> GP 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>CLOSE TO YOU</b> GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00</p>
<p><b>1</b> <b>AEON FLUX</b> R-13 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15</p> <p><b>2</b> <b>BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN</b> R-18 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b>FIREWALL</b> PG-13 12:10, 2:35</p> <p><b>4</b> <b>GOAL</b> GP 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15</p> <p><b>5</b> <b>PINK PANTHER</b> GP 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>CLOSE TO YOU</b> GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00</p>

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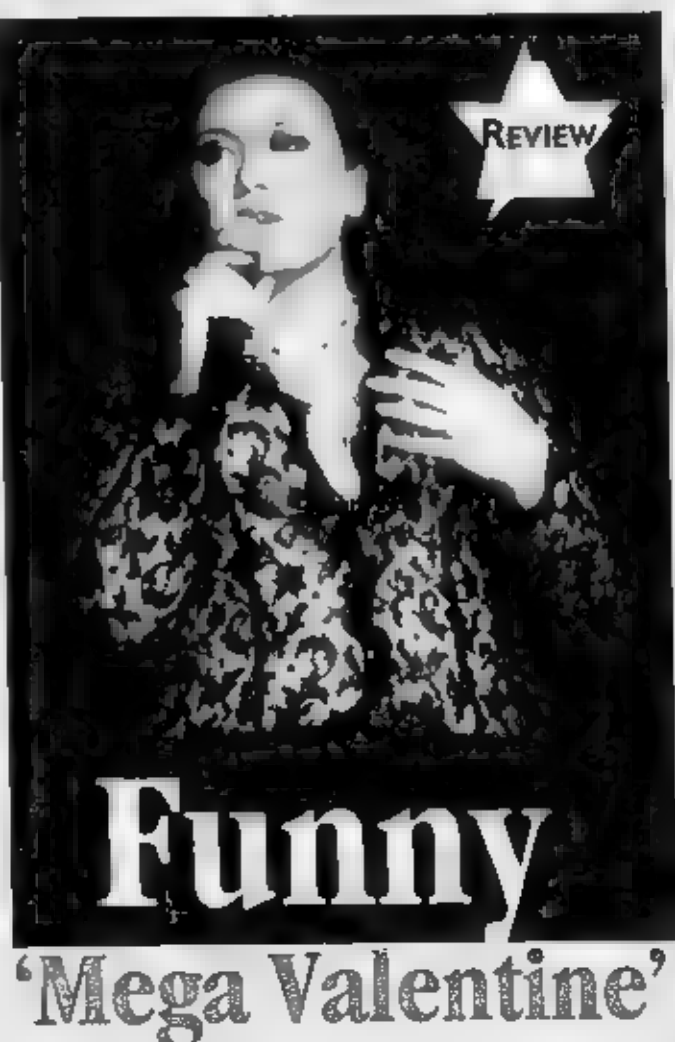
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## Funny 'Mega Valentine'

By Bayard San Diego Jr.

**STAND-UP COMEDY**  
could very well be Sharon Cuneta's next stop

Throughout "My Mega Valentine," her Feb. 12 concert at the Araneta Coliseum, the multi-media artist dispensed snappy one-liners, largely unscripted and unrehearsed, mostly self-deprecating.

No one, nothing was spared—from her fluctuating weight to former partner Robin Padilla, who made an unexpected entrance from his seat in the bleachers.

Cuneta even took on audience member Manny Pacquiao, alluding to the controversy in the boxing champ's love life: "Boys will be boys..."

"Only Sharon can get away with this," quipped guest Kik Ledesma, who designed one of Cuneta's gowns. At one point, Ledesma pinned Mega's skirt in place, right in front of the 10,000-strong audience.

### Eye candy

With the two divas around, performers Christopher de Leon and Christian Bautista were reduced to eye candy for the women in the audience.

Musical director Louie Ocampo's arrangements were slick, the better to emphasize the star's emotive skills.

Because the last time she performed at the Big Dome was four years ago ("The Mega Event"), Cuneta obviously relished the OPM (Original Pilipino Music) numbers.

Highlights were the Ocampo ballad "Paalam," the Ryan Cayabyab duet with Ledesma ("Kahit Ika'y Panaginip," "Parasong Pariskar" and "Magbali Ka Na, Mahal"), a heartfelt "Ikaw" (with harpist Noelle Casandra), "Bituing Walang Ningning" and, as encore, the Sharonians' anthem, "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas."

Yet another peculiarity of a Cuneta concert is the star going down the stage to join the crowd, which she did at the start of the show, much to the consternation of the coliseum security.

At concert's end, the crowd, expecting Cuneta to do it again, rushed to the front, totting cameras. She didn't descend the stage again, but one enterprising audience member managed to pass on a gift.

This might not happen in other concerts, but for Sharonians it was just another night with their idol.

The good news is, there's talk of a repeat.

## INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

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Channel	2:30PM	3:30PM	4:30PM	5:30PM	6:30PM	7:30PM	8:30PM	9:30PM	10:30PM	11:30PM	12:30PM	1:30PM	2:30PM
ABC 5			Speed	TMN Impact	Goat	Flowers	Charming Book of Magic	Four Faces	Big News	Billboard Debut			
ABS-CBN 1	Kapamilya Channel		Lulu Army	Mr. Bean	Weekend Update	TV Patrol Weekend	Who's the Boss?	Play Big Brother	Foundation Love	Las Vegas			
A2	SWAT Police		World Cafe	Weekend Update	Weekend Update	Weekend Update	Weekend Update	Weekend Update	Weekend Update	Weekend Update			
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Ben & Jerry										
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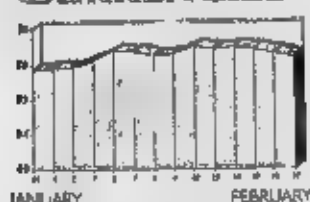
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# BUSINESS

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## HSBC's fearless forecast: P47.50 to \$1

### INDICATORS CURRENCIES



P 51.80 = \$1  
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2006

₱ 117.92 = \$1  
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2006

GOLD: \$540.30-540.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 16, 2006

### STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B7)

### Weak trade seen on interest worries

SHARE PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN volatile this week with worries over the rate of US and local interest rates.

BPI Trade said in a weekly report that the

STOCKS/B3

## Says sustained fiscal discipline to aid peso

By Michelle V. Remo

HONG KONG SHANGHAI BANKING CORP (HSBC) SAID THE PESO could appreciate to below 50 to a dollar and even get a credit-rating upgrade before the end of the year if the government's positive fiscal performance in 2005 would be sustained.

Arnulfo Veloso, HSBC treasurer and head of global markets, said in an economic forum last week that the peso could hit 49.50 against the greenback toward June, and further strengthen to 47.50 in the fourth quarter if the government's revenue targets would be hit.

"Markets may price in a credit upgrade should fiscal numbers improve and should we have a stable political landscape," Veloso said during last Friday's Economic Review and Outlook for 2006 organized by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP).

He said oil prices were not expected to be as volatile as last year because of the projected slowdown in the growth of the world economy that would dampen demand. The Philippines, which imports most of its oil requirements, is therefore not likely to experience

pressures on its currency given the softening oil prices.

Last year, the Philippine government surprised many by posting a budget deficit of only P146.5 billion, way below the official target of P180 billion set for 2005.

The lower-than-programmed deficit was due to tightened spending and higher revenues collected from state-owned firms and investments of the Bureau of the Treasury in dollar-denominated sovereign bonds.

But Veloso said the positive fiscal performance last year should be sustained if the government wanted to finally get the elusive upgrade on the country's credit ratings and for the peso to strengthen and breach the 50-to-a-dollar mark.

HSBC'S/B2

### WHAT'S INSIDE



Equitable boardroom betrayal /B3

Deficit seen to reach P147.4B in '06 /B8

Philippines world's best in IT /B12



PANGILINAN



GARCIA



DE CASTRO

## RPN 9, IBC 13 bidding attracts investors

By Clarissa S. Batino

Network or RPN 9

THE PLANNED SALE THIS YEAR of sequestered government stations RPN 9 and IBC 13 is generating interest from the likes of businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan, veteran media executives Frederico M. Garcia and Arlene de Castro and programmers like Solar Entertainment and even GMA Network Inc., well-placed sources said.

The sale of assets of RPN 9 and IBC 13 was previously estimated to yield a combined P4.5 billion for the government.

Sources said that Pangilinan, popularly known as MVE and Garcia, former president of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., were planning to bid jointly for Radio Philippines

Network or RPN 9. Talks about their tie-up have been going around the industry for at least three months now. Employees of RPN 9, according to another source, were already excited with the thought that MVP would be coming in.

During a media conference two weeks ago, advertisers said they were already anticipating the entry of MVP in broadcast.

"Advertisers said they will start placing their bets on whatever station MVP will buy because of his track record," said a source from the broadcast industry.

Pangilinan successfully turned Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. into the country's most profitable company and transformed previ-

RPN 9/B2

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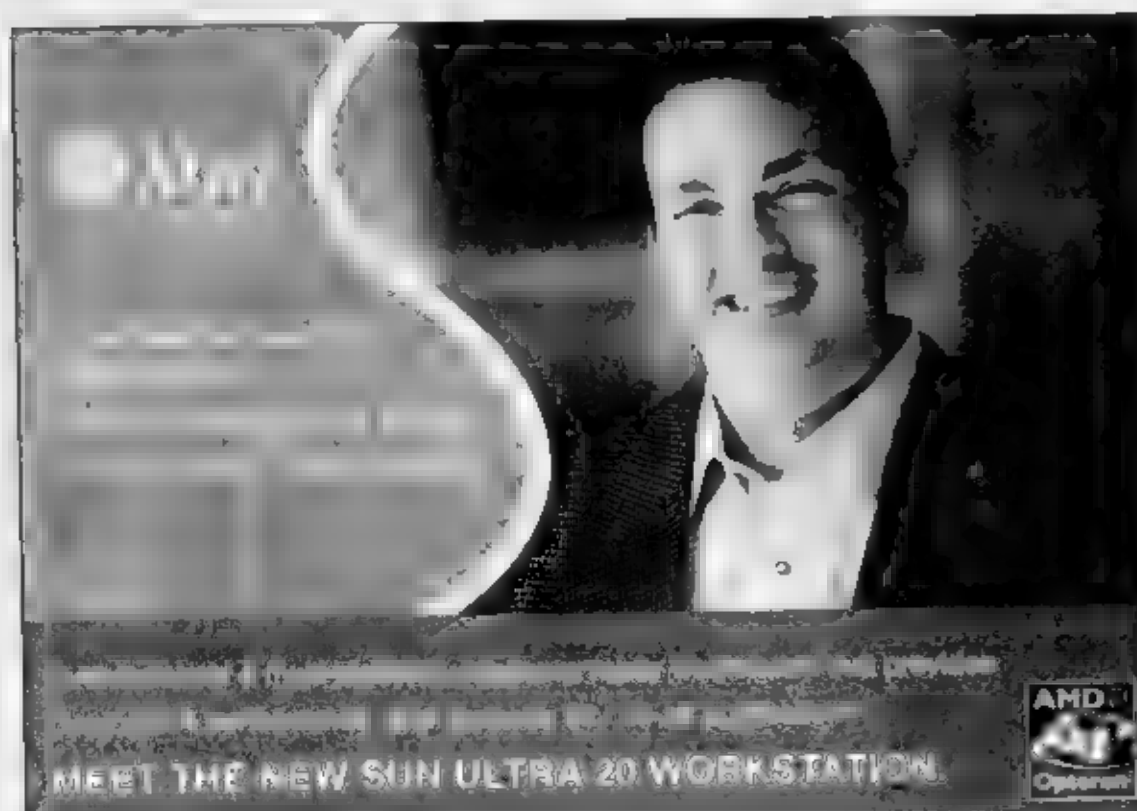
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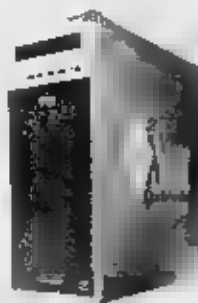
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## Avoiding jobless growth

THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S MAIN strategy to fight poverty is to pursue economic growth, declares my friend Rep. Joey Salceda, a key economic adviser of the President. In the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) "Economic Review and Outlook for 2006" forum last Friday where we both presented our respective takes on our current economic performance, he pointed out how 70 percent of actual poverty reduction in other countries could be traced to economic growth, and only 30 percent to redistributive policies.

Studies from the UNDP and the World Bank that examine data across various countries indeed bear him out on this. I started my leadership of Neda in 1992 with my boss President Fidel V. Ramos declaring that our government's prior task was to enlarge our national biningka, at a time when the economy was at a virtual standstill. And as economic growth picked up through the 1990s, so did poverty incidence decline quite significantly by the time we left office in 1998.

### Short of target

Note that it is not economic growth per se that leads to poverty reduction, but the jobs that are created with such growth. What worries me about the kind of growth we have been seeing of late is that growth in jobs had not been commensurate with growth in economic production. While we are not alone in this phenomenon called "jobless growth," the official 2005 employment data leave much to be desired.

The regular Labor Force Survey indicated that on an annual average, 699,000 jobs were created in the economy last year. The services sector accounted for 424,000 of these, agriculture contributed 249,000, and industry came up with the remaining 46,000 jobs.

The problem is, about one million new workers join the labor force yearly. This tells us that job creation had fallen short of the increase in workers looking for jobs. It's no wonder, then, that half a million workers were reported to have left for overseas jobs in the past year alone.

### Job quality down

There's even more cause for concern. It's bad enough that the quantity of new jobs created did not measure up to requirements and targets. The quality of the new jobs was likewise questionable, to say the least. Two things in the labor statistics bear this out.

One, underemployment rate—or the proportion of workers who indicated the desire or need to work more—rose sharply from 16.9 percent in October 2004 to 21.2 percent in October 2005. It's worth noting that a worker needs to have worked only one hour within the whole week previous to the survey to be classified as "employed." The numbers tell us that over a fifth of those who were working are in jobs that are not good enough, and thus have

## No FREE LUNCH



Cielito F. Habito

expressed the need to work even more.

Two, the data also clearly show that the bulk of the jobs created were of the self-employed ("own account workers") or unpaid family worker categories, accounting for 515,000 and 476,000 new jobs respectively. Only 146,000 of the new jobs were of the wage and salary worker category. In contrast, I distinctly recall how the share of the latter had grown in the 1990s, allowing me to report then that the quality of jobs our economy was generating had been improving.

### Quality of growth

The implication of all this is that it is not enough to pursue economic growth alone, in terms of simply raising the aggregate GDP growth rate. It must also be quality growth, i.e. growth that produces jobs and livelihoods for as many people as possible.

If the reported growth of the economy last year has not been widely felt, the explanation can be easily seen in the sources of that growth. The fastest growers in 2005 were the finance and mining industries, with 15.4 percent and 9.3 percent growth rates respectively. But the data tell us that there are only 337,000 workers in finance, and only 116,000 in mining. On the other hand, agriculture, with more than 12 million workers, only grew at 2 percent—not even fast enough to keep up with the growth in population.

### More baskets

We need, in short, to broaden the base of our economy's growth. We need to put our eggs, our economic stakes, in more baskets. It is not good enough to focus on the Clark/Subic-Metro Manila-Calebarzon geographic triangle, on the reasoning that it accounts for 55 percent of our GDP—when it accounts for a far lower proportion of our workers and population. It is not good enough to look to information and communication technology (ICT) to drive GDP growth from the services sector, when 70 percent of our poor are in the rural areas. Agriculture deserves much more attention than it is getting. If the 12 million farmers and farm workers and their families had more money in their pockets to spend, the rest of the economy would get a tremendous boost.

Only with such broader-based, job-creating growth would we see a substantial reduction in poverty.

Questions and comments welcome at [chabito@ateneo.edu](mailto:chabito@ateneo.edu)

## RPN 9, IBC 13 bidding ...

From page B1

ously losing Pilipino Telephone Corp. into a money-making telco.

"It helps that the golden handcuffs of Freddie with ABS-CBN is about to end so he is free to partner with anybody," said a source, referring to the non-compete clause on Garcia's retirement from the Lopez-owned network.

The duo may tie-up with Solar Entertainment, which is controlled by Wilson Tieng. Solar has a programming contract with RPN 9.

De Castro, according to the sources, was interested to produce the news content for IBC 13.

But the wife of Vice President Noli de Castro is unlikely to join a team that would include Garcia.

De Castro is reportedly organizing a news team to buy a block time in IBC 13.

"She is not going to buy the station because apparently, the group of El Shaddai is already controlling it," said another source.

Veteran broadcaster Korina Sanchez, according to sources, may join Garcia if he succeeds in buying into RPN 9, according to sources.

Pangilinan declined to comment on his interest in RPN 9. But a source close to him said that the station still has commercial value despite its existing contract with Solar Entertainment.

"If you include the block-timer in the consortium, then it might work," the source said.

Tieng, however, said he has not received any proposal from Pangilinan to bid together for RPN 9. "Our contract with RPN 9 is short term. It just got extended," said the owner of Solar Entertainment.

Whether the government could generate the estimated amount from the sale of the two stations is another matter.

Some analysts suggested the two stations could not fetch very attractive bids because most of their equipment were old and that much of the airtime, especially in IBC 13, have been sold to block-timers like El Shaddai.

## HSBC's ...

From page B1

If fiscal numbers would not be as good as expected, then the peso could stay within the 53 level, he said.

The national government's budget deficit for January is expected to be announced any time this week.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier expressed optimism that the target of reducing the deficit to P124.9 billion for the full year was not difficult to accomplish. He cited the decline in interest rates as a factor, explaining that this reduces the cost of the government's borrowings.

For the first quarter, while it is yet to be seen whether the fiscal targets for the full year would be attained, Veloso said the peso would range between 51.75 to 52.75 to the dollar.

Veloso added that interest rates were expected to be stable this year, with the Bangkok Sentral ng Pilipinas seen keeping the benchmark rates at 7.5 percent given the high level of liquidity in the system.

Do your managers let you sleep at night?

## MANAGING FOR RESULTS

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- Animate their presentations through their choice of words, vocal delivery and body language
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- Cope with a hostile audience

When customers lose their cool, do you lose yours, too?

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# Investments in hotels seen doubling to P4B

## DOT's job is to create demand for tourism industry, says Durano

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE EXPECTED ROBUST GROWTH IN tourist arrivals in the coming years is driving up investments in hotels and accommodation.

For this year, Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano said investments in the hotel business were expected to double to about P4 billion from last year's P2 billion.

Durano said a Korean businessman had committed to invest P2 billion this year to put up a 700-room hotel in Macan, Cebu City. Durano did not identify the Korean businessman but said he has businesses in Guam and New York. The investor, he said, was considering to have Hyatt, Sheraton or Intercon to manage the planned first-class hotel in Macan.

"This Korean investor went to Cebu last year for the first time and fell in love with the place," said the tourism chief during a roundtable discussion with the Inquirer business staff.

Another Korean group has also invested P500 million in a golf course in Cagayan de Oro.

Koreans make up 18.5 percent of the tourists coming to the Philippines.

Banking giants Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. and Philippine National Bank are in the process of reopening two foreclosed hotels also in Cebu City. Metrobank will soon open Marco Polo Hotel while PNB will operate the foreclosed Coral Reef Hotel.

PNB owner Lucio Tan is expected to tap the Ana Hotel Group, which also manages the Century Park Hotel, to operate Coral Reef Hotel, said Durano.

On top of these, about 10 resort operators in Boracay are planning to put up tourist facilities in Coron, Palawan, he said.

Durano said additional rooms were needed to meet growing demand. Citing an inventory of four- and five-star tourist accommodation facilities in the country last year, Durano said the country has only 12,000 rooms available.



DURANO

BY OT JOHNSON

This number can accommodate three million tourists a year. However, shortage occurs during peak seasons.

Including pension houses and motels, the number of rooms would be about 24,000. "By the end of 2007, we expect additional 2,000 rooms under the four- and five-star category," said Durano.

Durano said Cebu was the preferred destination of about half of the country's visitors, with Boracay coming in next.

Tourist arrivals in 2005 were placed at 2.8 million. The Department of Tourism expects the number to increase to at least 3 million this year.

Durano said 90 percent of these tourists preferred to stay in four- and five-star hotels.

The tourism chief is counting on Shangri-la Hotel and Discovery Suites which are putting up hotels in Boracay, as well as other projects in the pipeline to help address the expected surge in the demand for tourist accommodation facilities in the country.

However, hotel projects take at least two years to complete.

He said hotels in Metro Manila and in Cebu had been beefing up their capacity in anticipation of the steady increase in tourist arrivals, which were expected to reach five million in 2010.

DOT studies showed that each tourist spends here an average of \$90 a day. Japanese travelers spend at least \$10 more each.

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## The boy from Lupi

LUPI IS ONE OF THE SMALL TOWNS IN THE hinterlands of Camarines Sur. Lupi used to be called a railroad town, along with two other equally small towns, because, until the Andaya Highway was opened about five years ago, it was accessible only by rail. An upland town, Lupi's economy is almost entirely anchored on coconuts.

Recently, my grandson Paco came from Naga City with eight classmates (one girl). They were all sophomores in Digital Illustration and Animation (DIA) at the Ateneo de Naga University (ADNU). I put them up at my house for the night. They attended a one-day conference on digital animation at UP Diliman.

DIA is a four-year diploma course offered only by ADNU. DIA is above my head, but I understand the computerized special effects you see on TV and the movies nowadays are the handiwork of DIA practitioners.

About 10 years ago, the late Fr. Raul Bonoan, S.J., then president of ADNU and who had been building computer courses, sent one of his faculty members to the Microsoft headquarters in Seattle to study DIA. Then he was sent to Holland to a company that invented DIA. When he came back, he designed the curriculum. Since then, the curriculum has been expanded and toughened.

DIA is the most expensive course in campus. Tuition is P26,000 (a fabulous fortune in Naga) per semester. It is also the toughest. Dropout rate is high. Paco's sophomore class is down to 40 students. Money may get a student in at the freshman year, but only talent and aptitude will pull him through the four-year grind.

For the past two years, a team from ADNU has come to Manila to compete in digital animation against teams from UP and St. Benilde. Naga has won the major prizes every year.

One look at Paco's companions and I knew they were all kids from faraway barrios. In

## QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General



fact, Paco tells me that none of his classmates is from the big city of Naga. His buddies were children of small businessmen, government employees and farmers.

Christopher (Toper to his friends) was the boy from Lupi. Paco told me that Toper is among the best in class.

Toper, an only child, stays in Naga with his widowed mother in a small rented apartment. His mother works at the City Hall. She probably has a hard time keeping both ends meet but no sacrifice is too great for the hi-tech education of a talented son. That is a Filipino mother for you.

There is a lot of untapped talent in our far-flung barrios. All that is needed is a window of opportunity. ADNU has opened a window into the wonderful hi-tech world of Digital Illustration and Animation. And barrio kids and their parents are grabbing the chance.

Are there jobs waiting for Toper and his classmates after graduation? You bet there are. Those who have finished the DIA course have found good-paying jobs in Metro Manila. Some have gone into the DIA business for themselves.

Soon jobs will open abroad where there is a rising demand for digital illustrators and animators. ADNU is expanding its DIA facilities (a five-story building is being planned), and the course is being improved. Toper and his classmates are being groomed for export.

So what if our highly trained youth wind up working abroad? If Toper gets a job in Hollywood, hurrah for him. Think of the glory he will bring to his mother and the small town of Lupi.

## TeleEye ties up with Microserve

THE TELEEYE GROUP, A HONG KONG-based manufacturer of security cameras and systems, is forming a joint venture with local information technology firm Microserve Computers Co. in a bid to expand its presence in the Philippines and in the region.

The joint venture company, TeleEye Philippines Inc., will be the group's flagship company in the country.

"Given the broad application of TeleEye products, we believe that our success in Hong Kong can be continued in the Philippines," said Dr. Cliff Chan, TeleEye Group CEO.

"We are pleased to have Microserve Computers Co. as our partner, with its more than 10 years of experience in installing and servicing closed circuit TV (CCTV) products," Chan added.

Considering the Philippines' well-developed telecommunications and IT infrastructure, we believe that TeleEye has a

great potential in the Philippine market," said TeleEye Philippines Inc. president Ranny Coling, who is also head of Microserve Computers.

The TeleEye system enables users to view live video of company operations remotely through various communication media: telephone lines, mobile network or the Internet. Video can be recorded in hard disks and retrieved later for playback.

Coling said the system could be integrated with video cameras, audio or intelligent devices for use in the management of retail operations, manufacturing and warehousing, administration of property and buildings; overseeing of unmanned and restricted premises, and traffic control.

TeleEye is also eyeing partners to handle the markets in major cities and provinces nationwide.

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ONE-STOP SHOP INTER-AGENCY TAX CREDIT AND DUTY DRAWBACK CENTER

## AMENDMENT TO THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT DATED OCTOBER 13, 2000 DEFINING THE GUIDELINES ON TRANSFERABILITY OF TAX CREDIT CERTIFICATES ISSUED UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 226, THE OMNIBUS INVESTMENT CODE

Pursuant to Section 9 of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dated October 13, 2000 executed by and between the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Finance (DOF) in compliance with the provision of Article 21 of Executive Order No. 226 (E.O. 226) regarding the transferability of tax credit certificates (TCCs) issued under the said E.O., the following additional guidelines are hereby adopted:

1. Transfers by companies belonging to a distressed industry sector.

Transferees belonging to an industry sector which BOI has assessed to be in distress shall be allowed to transfer their outstanding TCCs to any BOI-registered transferees without requiring them to comply with the conditions imposed under Section 1c, 1e and 1f of the prevailing MOA, provided that this type of transfer shall be allowed for one year only from official notification to the Center by BOI that the industry sector is in distress without prejudice to renewal thereof upon approval by the Executive Committee.

2. Section 9 of the MOA is hereby amended to include the following paragraph:

"Henceforth, in order to simplify the administrative process in executing the existing MOA, and since BOI and DOF are well represented in the Center's Executive Committee, any amendments to the prevailing MOA including exceptions to the guidelines for meritorious consideration shall now be done through a resolution duly approved by the Center's Executive Committee, which resolution shall be for implementation without the need for another MOA between BOI and DOF, subject to compliance with the provisions of EO 226 and with the required administrative procedures under the Administrative Code."

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

(Sgd.) ELMER C. HERNANDEZ

Undersecretary

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

(Sgd.) GAUDENCIO A. MENDOZA, JR.

Undersecretary

Signed in the presence of:

(Sgd.) EFREN V. LEANO

Executive Director

Board of Investments

(Sgd.) ERNESTO Q. HANSEN

Executive Director

OSS-CENTER

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  
CITY OF MANILA

S.S.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 14th day of February 2006, in the City of Manila, officials  
exhibited to me their Community Tax Certificates as follows:

NAMES	CTC Number	ISSUED AT	ISSUED ON
Elmer C. Hernandez	12258003	Maycauayan, Bulacan	5-Jan-06
Gaudencio A. Mendoza, Jr.	82176828	Makati City	21-Jan-06

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal on the day, year and  
place above written:

Doc. No. 334

Page No. 83

Book No. V

Series of 2006

PU-1-Pub. 28, 27 & March 6, 2006

(Sgd.) ATTY GERVACIO B. ORTIZ JR.

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Pre-qualification and bidding forms are available at the MCD Office, VMC Millsite and at the VMC Makati Office during office hours from February 20 to March 3, 2006, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00. Deadline for submission of pre-qualification papers is on March 10, 2006. The pre-bid conference for qualified bidders is on March 17, 2006, 2:30 P.M. at the HRD Conference Room, VMC Millsite, Victorias City, Negros Occidental. The bidding date will be announced thereafter. Sealed bids shall be accompanied by a bidder's bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price in the form of cashier's manager's check payable to Victorias Milling Company, Inc.

For further inquiries, please contact Messrs. Carlos S. Quisichon, Dan C. Labrador and Edwin D. Togonon at VMC Millsite at telephone numbers (034) 399-3696 to 97 and (local) 2351 and 2308, and Mr. Ernesto "Toto" Oligo at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers (02)899-0485 and (02)890-7661 or visit our website [www.victoriasmilling.com](http://www.victoriasmilling.com) and e-mail us at [mcd@victoriasmilling.com](mailto:mcd@victoriasmilling.com).

Victorias Milling Company, Inc., reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that they may incur in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) TERESITA V. LAGAN  
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI - February 20, 2006)



## BUSINESS

# Plans to spend ahead of time seen to open Pandora's Box

### Budget deficit, tax revenues to determine credit-rating trend

By Doris C. Dumalaog

INVESTMENT BANK UBS HAS CAUTIONED the government against pump-priming, believing that aggressive capital spending ahead of the actual rise in revenues may open up a Pandora's Box.

"While we continue to believe that the extra revenue from the implementation of the expanded value added tax is forthcoming, plans to frontload spending may introduce an extra level of uncertainty," said Christa Janjic, UBS senior economist for Southeast Asia.

Janjic, fresh from her visit to Manila, said in a Feb. 17 commentary that the budget deficit and, particularly, the tax revenue data would be the most closely watched macroeconomic numbers in the country this year and would determine any credit rating action.

"We feel somewhat more cautious about the 2006 deficit target [though not the trend]," Janjic said. "The possibility of a higher budget deficit for the first quarter of 2006 versus last year risks confusing market watchers at a time when the entire focus is on the fiscal numbers."

"Besides, front-loading bears the

risk that it cannot be cut back should tax revenue come in below target."

The government expects the VAT to perk up the tax-to-GDP ratio by 1.3 percent of GDP while administrative measures are seen to add another 0.6 percentage point, bringing up the ratio to 14.6 percent this year from 12.7 percent last year.

"Our own estimate is more conservative and calls for a tax-to-GDP ratio of 14 percent only," Janjic said. "However, we expect this to be offset by higher non-tax revenue."

The government has vowed to intensify revenue collection efforts to achieve a GDP growth target of at least 5.7 this year while keeping the budget deficit within the target of P125 billion or 2.1 percent of GDP.

Sustaining the deficit reduction any further would be "entirely contingent on the VAT being successful, as there is no significant other tax revenue legislation planned at this stage," Janjic said.

The economist said UBS had not changed its views regarding the success of VAT.

As bulk of the revenue would stem from the hike in the VAT rate rather

than the introduction of a new tax, Janjic said collection efficiency should meet the 70 percent target rate.

For investors tracking the success of VAT, Janjic said additional revenues would be captured not only by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (P47.8 billion) but also by the Bureau of Customs (P27.3 billion).

London-based Fitch Ratings earlier upgraded its outlook on Philippine sovereign credit to "stable" from "negative," the second global rating agency, after Standard & Poor's, to recognize the government's improving cash budget position.

But while noting that short-term fiscal prospects had improved, Fitch also warned of lingering challenges.

"Even with the VAT in place, government revenue, relative to GDP, is the second-lowest of all rated sovereigns, and it is as yet unclear how or whether it will increase to meet mounting spending pressures, which we believe to be forthcoming," Fitch analyst James McCormack said. "A more significant fiscal adjustment than that undertaken to date will be required to avoid a recurrence of downward pressure on the sovereign ratings."

## RP urged to issue domestic dollar bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

WITH THE LOCAL MARKET AWASH in dollars, the national government has been urged to issue dollar-denominated bonds domestically, instead of abroad, to raise the remainder of its financing requirement for the year.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, who also serves as economic adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the government should take advantage of the huge volume of dollars that are now in the domestic market by borrowing locally.

"There are too many dollars here, so we can buy dollars domestically," Salceda said at the sidelines of the "Economic Review and Outlook for 2006" organized by the Management Association of the Philippines last Friday. "Doing so would help save on borrowing cost."

The government still needs to raise

close to \$1 billion to complete its foreign financing requirement for 2006.

Under the government's fiscal program for this year, it should borrow an estimated \$3.1 billion to service maturing foreign debts. Last January, it already sold \$2.2 billion worth of dollar- and euro-denominated bonds. It now needs to borrow only a little over \$900 million to complete its financing requirement.

Salceda said that by raising its dollar requirements domestically, the government could save a significant amount of borrowing cost, considering that interest rates here are lower.

He said another option was to borrow pesos, by increasing the volume of Treasury bills and bonds being issued by the government, and then use the proceeds to buy dollars from the domestic market.

The surge in dollar inflows is largely attributed to the increase in remit-

ances from overseas Filipino workers.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported that OFW remittances last year hit an all-time high of \$10.7 billion.

The government said the increase in OFW remittances was due to the higher number of Filipinos being deployed abroad, and to the higher-paying jobs that have opened to Filipinos.

Higher portfolio investments are also credited with helping bring in more dollars to the country.

Portfolio investments jumped to over \$2 billion in the first 11 months of 2005 from only less than \$500 million in the same period of 2004, Salceda said.

The economic adviser said the increase in portfolio investments was a result of the government's improving fiscal condition.

The budget deficit was kept at P146.5 billion last year, way below the target of P180 billion.



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Session Chair: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac  
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The Enigma of Marketing Mix in Today's Business  
Environment: Hit or Miss!

Speaker: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac

Session 2 - 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Consumer Analysis: Its Effect to Business Strategy

Speaker: Mr. Ricardo de Vera  
President, Pinpoint Direct Marketing

Session 3 - 11:00AM - 12:00NOON

Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning: Crucial  
Effect to Business Strategy

Speaker: Ms. Ma. Teresa Villanueva  
Senior Executive Officer, Ilmenex Basic

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SEC License Broker 0007675 As of February 20 2006		
CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Philippine)	150,000	
Alabang Country Club "B" (Philippine)	1,200,000	
Amway Golf Black & Nimitz Club	Plasma Golf	1,100,000
Bergau Country Club	820,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	100,000	80,000
Camp John Jay	240,000	180,000
Cambridge	500,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	
Cebu Golf Club	1,200,000	
Davao Sports Club	100,000	1,350,000
Club Filinvest	100,000	
Englewood "A" (Philippine)	Plasma Golf	
Forest Hills	350,000	90,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	
Forest Hills "D"	180,000	170,000
Manila Sports Club "A"	250,000	
Manila Sports Club "B"		
Manila Golf Corporate		1,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	11,200,000	1,000,000
Manila Polo		2,200,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"		300,000
Manila Yacht Club	Plasma Golf	800,000
Marikina "A"	120,000	50,000
Marikina (Corporate)		400,000
McManus Gold "A"	275,000	
McManus Gold "B"	350,000	
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"		350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	
Orchard Golf Club "D"	80,000	140,000
Rockwell	Plasma Golf	
Solo Lodge	400,000	
Solo Estate	1,200,000	1,100,000
Solo Estate "B"	1,600,000	1,500,000
Tagaytay Country Club	300,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	650,000
Tagaytay Meadows	750,000	800,000
Vale Verde (Individual)	100,000	85,000
Vale Verde (Corporate)	150,000	
Valejo Golf	220,000	200,000
	6,350,000	6,175,000

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## Mining industry expects \$347M in fresh infusion

By Christine A. Gaylican

FOREIGN AND LOCAL MINING COMPANIES this year are expected to infuse \$347 million in fresh investments, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

The fresh investments will fund new mining projects and expansion activities to be undertaken by medium- and large-scale mining companies this year.

"This year's programmed investments, once realized, will double the actual investments made in 2005," the bureau's Mining Economics Division said in its latest report.

Last year's investments amounted to \$107 million.

This year's investments will go to 23 priority projects in different mining tenements, said Mining Economics Division head Benjamin de Vera.

Sagittarius Mines, which has taken over the Tampacan Mining Project in Surigao, would infuse \$99 million to jumpstart its project this year. Atlas Consolidated Inc. subsidiary Carmen Copper Corp. is set to invest \$85 million to rehabilitate its Toledo Copper project in Cebu.

Austrasian Philippines Mining Inc. will invest \$39.12 million in its Didipio Copper-Gold project.

In 2004, the Chamber of Mines projected that investments in the country's mining sector could reach about \$6 billion to \$7 billion over the next 10 years.

# Deficit seen to reach P147.4B in 2006

## Investors on the lookout for Japanese speakers

By Juan Escandor,  
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PLI, CAMARINES SUR.—JAPANESE investors are on the lookout for workers fluent in Japanese. This development has prompted the provincial government to fund Japanese language instruction programs.

Shigeo Tsubotani, Fujitsu Philippines Inc. chair, said that the strategy of the Camarines Sur government to teach Japanese to workers in the province for free, coupled with the development of infrastructure facilities here, had succeeded in attracting Japanese investors to the province.

A 16-man delegation from Japan attended the graduation of the first batch of workers held here at the Capitol Convention Center on Jan. 27.

Of the graduates, 116 completed levels 4 and 3 Nihongo language courses.

Tsubotani said that in the short term, his company was interested in recruiting Japanese literate workers who had completed a four-level Nihongo course at the Information Technology Center of the Ca-

marines Sur provincial government.

He said the Japanese language program of the Camarines Sur government had created a stir among Japanese companies after the news was published in a Japanese publication.

Tsubotani said it would become a basic requirement for Japanese companies to recruit workers proficient in Japanese because he said it would increase productivity.

He said Fujitsu prefers Japanese literate workers because the manuals and instructions of its operations are all in Japanese—even if the software are written in English.

Fujitsu is the first Japanese company that located outside of Japan in 1961. Since then, it has invested a total of \$800 million in the Philippines.

Tsubotani said that the establishment of a link between the provincial government and Japanese companies has opened job opportunities for Camarines Sur's Japanese literate workers.

Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte said that the provincial government has expanded its language courses training to include cultural acclima-

tization to help workers adjust easily to the Japanese culture. Special focus is given to nurses, physical therapists and caregivers bound for Japan.

The governor said the provincial government is now ready to negotiate projects to be located in the province's first information technology (IT) park.

Villafuerte said the 2,000-seat call center facility in the five-hectare IT park is now ready for operation, while the assembly-line facilities are in the pipeline and expected to be completed in 2007.

Masanobu Kubo, vice president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, said that his group is also eyeing the tourism sites in Camarines Sur, especially the Caramoran group of islands.

He said that some of the sites have the best white sand hideaways and coves in the Asia-Pacific region.

Kubo, who represents Japan Airlines, is urging the Camarines Sur government to improve its airport facility to accommodate jumbo jets that can fly directly to the province from Japan.

## Congress doubts Customs, BIR will meet their targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET deficit is seen to rise to P147.4 billion this year, missing its official target by a wide mark, because of the expected slowdown in the economy that will affect tax collection.

According to the projection of the Congressional Planning and Budget Department (CPBD), the economic research arm of the House of Representatives, it would be difficult for the customs and internal revenue bureaus to meet their revenue collection goals for the year.

The CPBD's deficit forecast is 0.6 percent higher than last year's deficit of P146.5 billion, and 18 percent higher than the official ceiling of P124.9 billion set by the executive branch for 2006.

The economic research body said collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) might only reach P630.6 billion or 7 percent lower than its goal of P675.4 billion. The Bureau of Customs is expected to collect P182.4 billion—7 percent lower than its P196-billion target.

But the Bureau of the Treasury remains upbeat on the prospects of the fiscal sector, citing the decline in interest rates which, in turn, is expected to reduce the government's borrowing cost.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said that the government could even improve its P125-billion deficit target.

But the CPBD said that the BIR and the BOC might not be able to deliver the revenues expected of them due to the expected slowdown in productivity of some industries.

The CPBD's deficit forecast of P147.4 billion is equivalent to 2.4 percent of the estimated gross domestic product for the year. The official deficit-to-GDP ratio for 2006 is 2.1 percent.

CPBD said the economy, as measured by the GDP, was likely to hit a range of 4.5 and 5.1 percent compared with the official target of 5.7 to 6.3 percent.

## PLDT willing to compromise with Globe on access charges

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CO. (PLDT) is willing to reduce access charges—or the fees that telcos pay one another—but not to the level its chief rival Globe Telecom Inc. has in mind, a senior official said.

PLDT softened its stance after the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) compelled the telcos to

work out a compromise on the issue of access charges.

The NTC earlier said that it would treat Globe's complaint against PLDT as an administrative case if the two parties would fail to reach a deal.

A case against PLDT will jeopardize its existing P10 per call promo popular among its 2.1 million landline customers.

PLDT said the company could reduce the interconnection fees from the cur-

rent rate of P4 a minute from landline to mobile, and P3 a minute from mobile to landline and between fixed lines—but the rate would still depend on traffic volumes.

A PLDT official said it would offer volume discounts. The firm has already asked Globe for an acceptable level of volume to which the discounts may be pegged.

What the telco giant will insist, according to an official, is that fees on

calls to landline must be higher than calls to cellular phones.

Maintenance costs of mobile operators are lower due to higher utilization, unlike fixed lines, which are also more expensive to put up.

Access charges or termination rates are paid by the phone company that makes the call. The rates are determined bilaterally. These fees are included in the telcos' charges that subscribers have to pay.

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### AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, through the Bids and Award Committee (BAC), invites all interested consultants to register for eligibility and to bid for the Engagement of Financial Advisor for the Corporatization and Privatization of the Cebu Port Authority.

Interested Consultants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Application for Eligibility to the Bids and Award Committee through BAC Secretariat on or before March 6, 2006.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained for a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) at the BAC Secretariat starting March 7, 2006. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address. The eligibility envelope shall be opened on March 16, 2006.

The bid documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat starting March 29, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00). Pre-bid Conference shall be held on April 7, 2006, 2:00 P.M. at the Conference Room, Cebu Port Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) MARIO G. TAN  
BAC Chairman

Noted by  
(Sgd.) MARIANO C.J. MARTINEZ  
General Manager

Philippine Economic Zone Authority  
Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines  
Telephone: (832) 5613436 5513454 Facsimile: (832) 5613436  
E-mail: info@peza.gov.ph Website: www.peza.gov.ph

### Security Services Requirement of PEZA

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2006 intends to apply for a bid of P10,000,000.00 per annum for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. The description of the Bids is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents.

Interested Bidders must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Application for Eligibility to the Bids and Award Committee through BAC Secretariat on or before March 6, 2006.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained for a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) at the BAC Secretariat starting March 7, 2006. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address. The eligibility envelope shall be opened on March 16, 2006.

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CPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.



# Pancake House income up 82% in 2005 to P34M

By Christine A. Gaylican

PUBLICLY LISTED FASTFOOD CHAIN PANCAKE House Inc. (PHI) was expected to have recorded a net income of P34 million in 2005, up 82 percent from P18.67 million the previous year, according to unaudited reports.

The reports showed that PHI's flagship brand, Pancake House, and Dencio's Foods Specialists Inc. were the main profit drivers last year.

Higher sales posted by Pancake House and Dencio's branches enabled PHI to increase revenues last year by 63 percent to P818 million from P503 million in 2004.

Unicapital Associate for Strategic Research Nafia G. Tino said PHI flagship brand Pancake House earned P48 million last year, almost double the P25 million recorded in 2004.

Pancake House, which increased its branch network to 58 last year from 54 stores in 2004, grew its revenues by 17.73 percent to P498 million from P423 million the previous year.

System sales for Pancake House likewise grew to P692 million from P560 million during the period as a result of the ongoing store network expansion.

System sales reflect the combined sales of both company-owned and franchised stores.

PHI, which also operates Teriyaki Boy Group Inc., also posted higher earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization in 2005 of P 115.3 million from P80.3 million the previous year.

According to Unicapital, PHI will have to work harder to put its Dencio's chain of stores back to profitability.

Dencio's ended 2005 with 21 stores, which will grow to about 26 stores this year, according to the company's preliminary report to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

PHI took over Dencio's in September 2004. PHI's financial performance is expected to improve further with the recent addition of Teriyaki Boy to its portfolio.

PHI now controls 70 percent of Teriyaki Boy.

Optimistic on the growth of fast casual restaurants in the Philippines, PHI has committed to put up more outlets in the coming years.

The group is expected to end 2007 with a branch network of 126 stores, 74 of which would be Pancake House, 30, Dencio's; and the remaining 22, Teriyaki Boy.



**TARSIERS FOR SALE.** Rising Sun Farm Fishpond Resort owned by Dr. Rogelio Bargas at Sitio Guam, Poblacion West Tabuk, Kalinga, sells exotic animals and fishes. Tarsiars, which are not endemic to Kalinga, sell for P4,000 each. BY ESPRITO, FOR NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

## EXPORT BANK LOSES CASE

In a landmark decision penned by the Hon. Judge DELIA H. PANGANIBAN of Makati RTC Branch 64, the EXPORT & INDUSTRY BANK (EIB) lost the case it filed against DR. FLORANTE E. JONSAY, CEO of MOMARCO Import Co., Inc., who was charged of seven (7) counts of ESTAFA for violation of the Trust Receipt Law.

In year 2000, Momarco obtained an Omnibus Line from EIB which included a line for Import Letters of Credit and Trust Receipts. Using this line, it was able to import animal health products from March to October 2000. The Asian Financial Crisis back in 1997 negatively affected the economies of Asia and Momarco was one of those companies severely affected. Being heavily dependent on importation, Momarco's business failed when the interest rates abruptly jumped from 12% to 41% while the peso parity dropped from P26 to P42 to the dollar.

On March 27, 2001, the Office of the City Prosecutor of Makati City through the Assistant City Prosecutor, Fiscal DELFIN R. LOPEZ, found probable cause to indict respondent JONSAY in court for seven (7) counts of ESTAFA under Article 315, par. 1(b) of the Revised Penal Code, in relation to PD 115.

After nearly 5 years of litigation, and based on the records shown to the Honorable Court, the bank failed to establish the basic elements of ESTAFA they filed against respondent FLORANTE E. JONSAY. The court said: "in determining whether the accused violated the provision of the Trust Receipt Law, reference should be made to the existence of all the elements of ESTAFA under Article 315, paragraph 1(b) of the RPC. In the case at bar, an element of crime is lacking which is the attendance of damage or prejudice to another."

The court noted that the accused Momarco is a long-time client of the bank, which was adequate reason why the latter granted Momarco an Omnibus Line. The loan was secured by real estate mortgage over two parcels of land. The Trust Receipts executed by the accused in behalf of Momarco were not only secured by the goods imported by virtue of the trust receipts, but also by the real estate mortgage executed by Momarco in favor of EIB.

When Momarco defaulted, the court noted that: "in fact, EIB had already foreclosed the real estate mortgage" and the titles to the two parcels of land are now in the name of the bank. "Therefore, no prejudice could have been suffered by the bank." The Court further noted that there was admission from the accused that his company received and sold all the products covered by the trust receipts but did not remit the proceeds of the sale due to the fact that the full value of the imported goods were more than adequately covered by collaterals. The accused told the court: "my collateral is sufficient to cover my obligation."

Export & Industry Bank granted MOMARCO an OMNIBUS LINE for P49 million, secured by real estate mortgage over two parcels of land with a BIR zonal value of P400 million, which EIB appraised at P99 million. The bank released only P31.70 million. This fact did not escape the attention of the court when it said: "Moreover, the failure on the part of MOMARCO to pay its obligations under its trust receipt obligation is not intentional and willful because these were brought about by the economic hardships which the company suffered. The fact of non-payment was never denied by the accused. The accused himself testified that the failure was attributed to the inability of the company to service its debts and to finance its subsequent importations. Momarco still had financial recourse, because it had not yet exhausted its credit line with EIB. However, the bank failed to release the additional loan application of Momarco, which it could have used to finance its importation and business operation. This aggravated the already sad financial plight of MOMARCO."

In its Decision, the Court said it "understands that once in a while, a business suffers severe reverses and Momarco is not an exception. It would therefore be unfair to equate the failure of the accused to pay with intent to defraud." It also found that Momarco even made partial payments on the trust receipts, aside from the marginal deposits.

The Court found that the prosecution failed to prove the guilt of the accused JONSAY, and thus, "the accused is acquitted in Criminal Cases No. 01-1078, 01-1079, 01-1080, 01-1081, 01-1082, 01-1083 and 01-1084 for violation of Article 315 par. 1(b) of the Revised Penal Code in connection with Section 132 of PD 115 or Trust Receipt Law." DR. FLORANTE E. JONSAY can be accessed through his email (momarco\_rot@yahoo.com) for any information pertaining to the case. He is likewise filing a damage suit against EIB.

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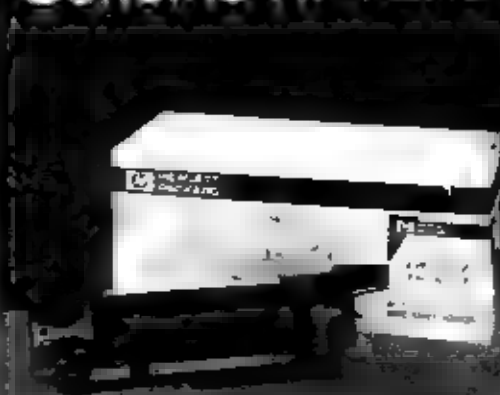
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Editor Leo Magno

## Calls made through cellular, wi-fi convergence

By Leo Magno

BARCELONA, SPAIN—THE EMERGENCE of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) as an alternative to traditional phone networks has long been discussed, but at the 3GSM World Congress held here, a compromise has been struck between the cellular network and wireless fidelity (wi-fi).

Word has been spreading that wireless voice calls may, in the future, be routed through Internet traffic instead of the cellular network. Through wireless local area networks (WLANs) or wi-fi, people are able to make calls via their computers. But since you cannot carry your PC around the mall or place your notebook next to your ear, wouldn't it be good to make VoIP calls using a mobile phone?

A mobile way of making calls using a converged cellular and IP network was shown at the 3GSM World Congress. A live demonstration was made by Nokia using unlicensed mobile access (UMA), where a call from a GSM network switched over to a wi-fi connection seamlessly. The hybrid GSM-WLAN phone used was the Nokia 6136.

Imagine you're at a mall or at home with a wi-fi connection. You can use the hybrid phone to make calls using VoIP

Then, when you move away from the wi-fi range, the call would be handed over, without dropping, to the GSM network used by your cell phone.

The call cost would drop dramatically since you do not pay extra minutes while in range of the wi-fi access (which, we are assuming, is already paid for). You would only pay for the minutes used when you move out of range of the wi-fi hotspot. This increases mobile service availability, decreases subscriber call cost and, for the operator, decreases the costs related to network deployment.

Hybrid or converged devices like the Nokia 6136 shows a complementary way of using VoIP and cellular, whereas before VoIP was seen as a threat to both cellular and landline. Here, we see the cellular side and the Internet side meshed together into a core network.

On the user end, you'd have an expanded range of mobility, according to Kai Oistamo, executive vice president and general manager for mobile phones at Nokia.

"You can use wi-fi where the GSM signal is weak because each wi-fi access point or base station acts as a connecting tower as if it were a cell site," he said.

If the user already has access to a wi-fi

network at home or outside, wi-fi is used to include voice calls, bringing down the total call cost and optimizing the use of the hotspot.

On the operator end, said Oistamo, operators can introduce new service plans with competitive prices when the phone is used at home or at wi-fi hotspots.

"This means less cost and less congestion for operators," said Oistamo, as the traffic is rerouted through the Internet instead of through the cellular network.

This is made possible by Nokia's Unified Core Network solution for converging Internet and cellular networks, of which UMA is a key part. UMA technology enables the use of broadband and unlicensed access technologies such as wi-fi to expand mobility for users of voice and data services. It can also be an alternative approach to extending cellular indoor coverage (where signal is weak indoors) and to areas unserved by the cellular network but have wi-fi coverage.

In the Philippines, mobile operators Smart Communications and Globe Telecom have both cellular and wireless Internet networks and could theoretically deploy such a converged GSM/wi-fi service.

"That innovation is inevitable, thus

telcos have to make the most out of them for the benefit of the consumers," said Jones Campos, assistant vice president for public relations at Globe. "Affordability and superior service is also crucial. It should be easy to use."

Ramon Isberto, public affairs head of Smart, had the same concerns.

"This will be rolled out in the country but to really catch on, the technology should be easy to use," he said.

And, since wi-fi would soon allow people to use hybrid handsets to make VoIP calls, the "right business model" would help it fare better in the country, Isberto said. He added that American operator Vonage, which has been commercially offering VoIP services via mobile, has not reported significant revenues from the service.

Vonage is offering mobile calls via Internet for \$14.99 a month.

"How to make money is the issue with VoIP," said Isberto.

Smart currently offers its own wi-fi service with Smart WiFi, coupled with broadband wireless networks through Meridian Telekom and the Internet services of its parent company, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Globe, on the other hand, offers inter-

net and data services via GlobeQuest. GlobeQuest head Jesus Romero said that hybrid GSM/wi-fi phones and converged services are promising.

"We think this is good because it will expand the base of those who can use VoIP over wi-fi," said Romero.

But will the number of hotspots in the Philippines and the technology itself become an issue, bearing in mind that wi-fi was not designed to carry voice?

"The technology will not be an issue," Romero said. "If they launch that phone, operators should provide the services around it. The services should leverage on the technology."

Romero added that such a technology may actually spur the growth of wi-fi in the country.

"Wi-fi is now used mainly for browsing," he said. "With voice, it will increase the usage and the number of hotspots."

Is Globe looking at deploying such converged services?

"Definitely we will introduce it when it comes to the market," Romero said.

Elsewhere, European operator Orange has announced that it will be using the Nokia 6136 to offer a converged GSM/wi-fi service.

With a report from Erwin G. Oliva.

## Mobile e-mail race heats up

By Leo Magno

BARCELONA, SPAIN—THE RACE FOR technology companies to push e-mail to your cell phones and other mobile devices took a fast turn here at the 3GSM World Congress, with Microsoft Corp., Nokia and Research In Motion (RIM) all wanting to deliver e-mail wherever you go.

Software giant Microsoft said it would provide solutions to deliver e-mail via Direct Push through Windows Mobile 5.0 and Windows Server. Nokia unveiled push e-mail plans after successfully acquiring Intellisync Corp. for \$430 million. Intellisync is the rival of RIM, maker of the BlackBerry handset which started the push e-mail revolution but is facing a possible injunction stemming from a patent lawsuit filed against it by NTP Inc. This may cause sales and services for the BlackBerry to be halted in the US.

All three companies were in full force here at the 3GSM World Congress, but Microsoft was seen as the dark horse, being a non-traditional phone company seen as invading the turf of Nokia and BlackBerry.

Nokia and BlackBerry were unfazed by Microsoft's announcements that it would dominate the push e-mail market with its "more than 100" mobile device partners. These partners include makers of personal digital assistants aside from traditional cell phones.

"We will immediately start integration of Intellisync into Nokia devices through the Nokia Business Center solution," Dave Grannan, Nokia general manager for email and enterprise solutions, told Infotech. "By the third quarter Intellisync will be fully integrated and the brand dissolved."

But Nokia is not limiting its solutions to its own phones.

"This is an open system," Grannan said. "We can partner with Microsoft and even BlackBerry. It could be on a Nokia platform, but if we push our e-mail to other devices we still win."

Nokia already has a partnership with BlackBerry through BlackBerry Connect which allows the latter's software to be used in Nokia phones. Grannan said the partnership will not change nor affected by the acquisition of Intellisync.

"If we could get our software into more devices then so much the better," said Clyde Foster, chief operating officer of Intellisync, in an interview. "We will support other mobile software platforms. We are already in 35 other non-Nokia platforms. Intellisync won't be exclusive on Nokia (phones)."

Meanwhile, RIM said it had contingency plans in case it loses its patent lawsuit in the United States. It said that an alternative technology will continue to make BlackBerry devices run in case the injunction pushes through.

"Remember the case will affect US subscribers, not the entire market," said Ben Travers, Europe product manager for BlackBerry, in an interview. "There will be lots of competitors out there including Microsoft, but we already have a big head start considering we pioneered this industry. At the same time we are partners of Nokia and Sony Ericsson through BlackBerry Connect so we are not limited to our hardware."

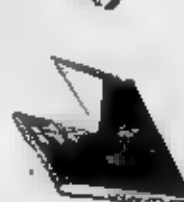
Grannan said RIM and Microsoft would target the high end of the market while Nokia could go from the entry level to sophisticated "smart phones."

In separate interviews, Travers and Grannan both said that their advantage lies on having push e-mail software based on an open platform, and that Microsoft will expectedly offer its Direct Push solution to devices running on Windows Mobile. RIM and Nokia, on the other hand, are working to make their push e-mail available to devices running on Symbian, Palm, Windows Mobile and other platforms.



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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

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## RP the world's best in IT

McKinsey says Philippines low in cost, high in quality

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED service sector in the Philippines is the best in the world in terms of cost and quality of labor, but it needs to improve on international perception issues regarding the local market, according to global research and consultancy firm McKinsey.

Christopher Beshouri, president and chief executive of McKinsey Philippines, said in a report presented during the e-Services Philippines 2006 held last week that the country was clearly in a "good" position, but could be-

come "great."

McKinsey data showed that the labor cost per hour in the Philippines was just 12 percent of what a BPO operator would spend in the United States, better than India's 13 percent.

As for the suitability of job applicants on the requirements of a firm, the Philippines bested those from Russia, China and India, the data showed.

Further, the Philippines also excels in terms of the number of available workers as a percentage of total population as well as infras-

tructure related to information technology, real estate and transportation.

Still, Beshouri said the country could still capture an "unfair share" of the global market if it comes up with a clear strategy and program to address its weaknesses.

Beshouri recommended that the country focus on the non-voice sector or services other than call centers, to continue to attract high-profile locators, and enhance the suitability of the labor supply through investments in language education and development of skilled managers.

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## BSP tightens rules on banks linked to pre-need firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY BOARD OF THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved tighter rules on banks acting as trustees of affiliate pre-need companies.

BSP chief legal counsel Juan de Zuniga said in a briefing that the new rules likewise limited the investments that trustee-banks could choose from.

Trustee banks affected by the new regulation would be given one year to clean up investments that do not meet the new standards set by the BSP, Zuniga added.

The new regulations require trustee banks that manage assets of affiliate firms to treat those accounts as exposure to Dosri (directors, officers, stockholders and related interests).

Among others, the General Banking Law limits banks' Dosri exposure to 15 percent of total loan portfolio.

Before the rules were issued, the BSP had no guidelines covering banks acting as trustees of related firms.

There are at least four banks with affiliate pre-need firms: Bank of the Philippine Islands (Ayala Plans Inc.), Philam Savings (Philam Plans), United Coconut Planters Bank (Coco Plans Inc.) and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (Pacific Plans).

The BSP also narrowed down the type of investments trustee-banks could invest in. Among these are Philippine government securities, triple-A debt papers or notes guaranteed by triple-A rated issuers or other risk-free investments.

Meanwhile, Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said the IC was willing to take the pre-need sector under its wings if mandated to do so.

"There are certain similarities with insurance products and some are even affiliated with insurance firms," she said.

## Napocor readies Semirara rehab program

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH MORE THAN 33 PERCENT OF THE OIL spill-affected areas in Semirara Island cleaned up, the state-run National Power Corp. has come up with a rehabilitation plan involving the reforestation of affected mangrove areas and provision of alternative livelihood to the residents.

The state firm said its rehabilitation plan focused on sustainability and aimed to provide long-term benefits to the island's residents.

Safety audits would also be conducted on Napocor's barges, with emphasis on oil spill control, to prevent a repeat of the oil spill, the contaminated areas surrounding the island.

Further research and studies on the behavior and biodegradation of spilled oil, as well as a baseline productivity valuation of Philippine mangroves and other marine ecosystems, would also be conducted.

The availability and effectiveness of local materials for absorbents used for oil spill cleanup would also be studied.

Meanwhile, personnel from Napocor, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Philippine Coast Guard, as well as residents of Semirara Island continued to clean the affected areas.

To date, more than 33 percent of the 113 hectares affected by the oil spill, including the mangrove areas, had been cleaned.

Almost 31,000 sacks out of an estimated 60,000 sacks of contaminated debris and material had likewise been collected.

Of the collected sacks, more than 13,000 sacks had been transferred to the designated permanent dumpsite.

Napocor said it was also considering using bioremediation technology, which makes use of various organic materials to break down the spilled oil with no adverse effects on the environment.



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## BUSINESSMonday

## Man-made forest eyed as first RP organic coffee farm

By Vincent Cabreja  
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

**TUBLAY, BENGUET**—SEÑOR Ramon Coromina, a Spanish-Filipino who migrated to this town in 1964, saw the forest for the trees as soon as he set foot on a 24-hectare hill he had bought here.

The hill overlooks vast Ibaloi and Kankanaey vegetable terraces but absent was the pine tree canopy that characterized Benguet landscapes during that period.

So Coromina, who is known here as "Señor," set his household and his Kankanaey neighbors to work, planting by hand saplings of pine, acacia, mulberry and typical arabica coffee trees on every square inch of Coromina land, says Mateo Amado, 68, who was part of Coromina's team.

This chore took them until 1968 to complete, Amado says.

The Coromina forest will soon take center stage should it receive the country's first certification as an organic coffee farm, courtesy of the German government.

Roland Ferstl, a consultant of the Figaro Coffee Foundation Inc., has cited the forest as one of the local industry's "best practices" in Luzon.

Ferstl has lined it up for organic certification by Naturland, a German industry body that supports organic food by providing guarantee seals to mainstream organic products all over Europe.

Ferstl and Pacita Juan, Figaro chief executive officer, toured the forest last month.

Slipping coffee under pine trees, Juan says the manmade forest embodies all that is right about

Cordillera arabica.

Most of these coffee farms in the Cordillera are 50 years old, which testifies to their organic nature, says Ferstl, because poverty prevents many farmers from spending on chemical fertilizers to make the trees bear fruits.

But getting the farmers to cooperate and building economical and efficient coffee farms is a matter that requires role models, says Juan.

Coromina had always been a community influence, says Amado, who is now the forest's caretaker.

In a period when environmental crusades were not yet popular, Coromina spoke to his Ibaloi and Kankanaey neighbors about "building a forest to keep the whole hill from collapsing," Amado says.

Throughout his lifetime, Coromina had become a hometown critic, arguing against new programs that threaten the local environment, says Amado.

At first glance, he says, "Señor" may have even been right about the fragility of the community's ecology.

To reach the Coromina property, people still need to hike or drive through a narrow mud road, that is painstakingly carved from the bare mountainside after every storm. The forest roots have been sturdy enough to control small creeks that collect near the Coromina property, and which flow down the hill.

The cliffs, where the access road is perched, are pockmarked with pocket mines, so the family is at the forefront of a fight to keep mines away from this part of Benguet.

Earlier, the Coromina children fought off a Philippine mining firm, which had planned to include portions of Tublay villages in a new venture, by winning a suit in court.

The coffee trees that originally grew beneath the Coromina pine cover are nearly 20 feet tall, and thus too high to harvest.

So Lupe, one of Coromina's daughters, asked Amado to plant 4,000 new coffee trees which the caretaker now prunes and harvests every start of the year.

"It takes me and my children three months to complete harvesting three tons of beans," Amado says.

Keeping with the pristine organic lifestyle here, Amado peels his harvest using a makeshift instrument, made of scrap wood, vehicle parts and aluminum water pipes, before the beans were roasted.



MATEO Amado has been growing coffee since he was a boy.

## Revealing ...

From page B2-1

grown arabica is also precious because backyard tree farms in the Cordillera can only produce 1,725 metric tons. The Philippines has a yearly supply shortfall of 35,000 metric tons, and 90 percent of what is local produced for the market is robusta.

Figaro has spearheaded a campaign to revive the Philippine Liberica bean, or barako, but since 2004, it had also launched a marketing campaign for organic coffee, according to Zarah Perez, who organizes Cordillera cooperatives for the Figaro Coffee Foundation.

But on their first foray into Benguet, they were forced to confront some sins of the past.

As early as the 1970s, big coffee chains and manufacturers sourced coffee supplies from local farmers along the so-called Mountain Trail, only to drop them when they failed to supply the firms with beans according to specifications, Castillo says.

The Mountain Trail is a reference to Halsema Highway, which leads to coffee farms in Benguet, Mt. Province and Ifugao. Perez has also been negotiating with coffee farmers in Kalinga.

Castillo says arabica was probably introduced to the region when Spaniards began foraging for gold in Benguet, but coffee never became a traditional crop, and is thus grown only because coffee trees flourish in the mountains.

Government tried to reopen this marketing chain through special agricultural projects like the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (Cecap), says Jorge Salinas, a University of the Philippines Baguio political science instructor, who wrote a paper on the local coffee trade.

But technologies and training in agro-management were "imposed, rather than taught to cooperatives," Salinas says, and a supply group that was revived "simply collapsed back to idleness when no one was looking."

Juan says farmers began to respond to Figaro when it started to buy the crops at mainstream prices.

"Ganyan naman ang Filipino farmers. They need a model, because they always say 'Oh no. Here's another bright idea.' But when they actually saw us buying the organically grown coffee, well, Zarah (Perez) is now more popular here than Sharon Cuneta," she says.

Figaro's presence is meant to jumpstart a region-wide organic food consciousness, Juan says, but getting organic certification for Cordillera coffee will accelerate the expansion of modern arabica farms here.

The German Development Service is interested in providing organic certification for most indigenous Filipino farms here, which are "organic by default," because farmers are unable to invest in chemical fertilizers for coffee trees that previously had no economic value, said Roland Ferstl, a German coffee expert who is helping Figaro in training local farmers.

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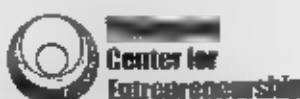
Malaki talaga ang maitutulong ng Go Negosyo Entrepreneurship Summit and Expo sa mga nais magtayo o mapalaga ang kanilang mga negosyo. Dapat nga noon pa nagkaroon ng ganitong klaseng event para natulungan din ako nang sinisimulan pa lang namin ng asawa ko ang Lara's Gifts and Decors. Dahil Political Science and kursong tinapas ko, 'di sapat ang aking kaalaman noong nag-uumpisa ako. Kinailangan tuloy naming mag-asawa na mag-observe at magpunta sa iba't-ibang trade fairs at exhibitions para mapag-aralan ang export industry. Sumulat din kami sa daan-daang buyers abroad para makapagsumula. Sa wakas, mayroon ding nagpaunlak sa amin at 'di naglaan ay napalaki din namin ang aming kapital. At mula sa isang maliit na opisina at 2 empleyado, nakapagtayo kami ng offices at show rooms sa New York, Minneapolis at Hong Kong at umabot sa mahigit na 5,000 ang aming empleyado. Nakakatutwa talagay!

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DAY 1 (February 23, 2006/ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

PCE Recognition of Outstanding Entrepreneurship Teachers / Students / Programs by PCE • FORUM 1: Building National Confidence and Optimism To Inspire More Successful Filipino Entrepreneurs. Moderators: Rico Hizon & Anna Maria Periquet. Panelists: Socorro Ramos, Hon. Jose Concepcion III, Dr. Rolando Horlalessa, Atty. Felipe Gazon, Yvonne Tan, Henry Lim Bon Jang, Rodrigo Rivera, Maribel Pineda. FORUM 2: A Global Market Beckons The Filipino Entrepreneur. Charlie Chan's Business Outlook. Grace Glory Go • LUNCH BREAK TOPIC: Feng Shui Master Dennis Mendiala, Dr. Paco Sandojas, Guillermo Luchanico, Ben Colayco, Menardo Jimenez Jr. • FORUM 3: Uncommon Heroes for the Common Good. Panelists: Dr. Julian Arboleda, Francisco Colayco, Ray Gopez Jr., Rina Lopez-Bautista, Dylan Wilk, Gerry Geronimo • Breeding The Entrepreneurial Mindset and Culture By Raju Mendhiya • FORUM 4: New Approaches In Entrepreneurship Education • CULMINATING FORUM: Triggering the Age of Entrepreneurship in the Philippines. Panelists: Sec. Arthur Yap, Sec. Estrella Alabastro, Chairman Carlos Puno, OIC/Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary Zorayda Amelio Alonzo, Executive Director Godelina Amata, Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte, Linda Wirth, Johella Koo, Prof. Josephine Aguilar

DAY 2 (February 24, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Opening Ceremonies Cutting of Ribbon: VP Noli de Castro, Sen. Manuel Villar, Sen. Manuel Roxas II, Sen. Ramon Magpaysay Jr., Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Cong. Wilfredo Alvarado, Mayor Rosendo Capco, Mayor Freddie Tuga, Government Officials, Partner Organizations • International Workshop on Technopreneurship Conducted by Prof. Patrick Chan. HOST DOST • Business Plan Competition Brief: PCE/PESO, CFBC, ENEDA, JCI, MSBC, TIES, OHIA, GEN-P • Easy Tips on How to Start a Retail Business and How to Supply to Retailers By: Steven T. Cole • "Elevator Pitch" Exhibition by Business Plan Contest Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options for Outstanding Business Plans • Easy on the pocket Business Ideas By: Food Cart Association of the Philippines • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lampions at the Central Plaza, Market! Market!

DAY 3 (February 25, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

The Franchise Boom: Now Is the Time to Get Started By: Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. • International Workshop on Technopreneurship Conducted by Prof. Patrick Chan. HOST DOST • Franchise Your Business An Option for Growth. By: Philippine Franchise Association • The Entrepreneur Know Thyself By: Lex Ledesma • Finding Your Opportunity of a Lifetime! Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas? By: Jay Bernade • Moving Innovations to Market By: Mark Arroyo • The Essentials of a Successful Business Start-up By: Joel Santos • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work. Moderator: Mas Bolante • Panelists: National Livelihood Support Fund, Personal Bank Loan providers, ABS-CBN Bayan Microfinance Foundation, Pawnshops, Cooperatives • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital. By: Intellectual Property Office

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Lydia Ramos pounding dried Arabica coffee beans at Barangay Pinsao, Baguio City. She sells her coffee beans at P95 a kilo.



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For more information, call 952-29-34/ 952-40-28/ 436 78-26/ 951 29-66 and 913-65-51.

## FORD CALLS ON EXPEDITION AND F-150 OWNERS

Ford Group Philippines is advising owners of 1994-2002 model year Expedition and F-150s who have not set an appointment for a Field Service Action on the Speed Control Deactivation Switch, to immediately contact any Ford dealer for the replacement of the switch, FREE OF CHARGE.

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Walang ina na 'di nangangarap ng magandang kinabukasan para sa kanyang anak. Isang kinabukasang dulot ng paghahandang dala ng edukasyon.

Gaya ng ina, hangad din ng Philam Plans ang isang magandang kinabukasan para sa inyong anak. Sa pamamagitan ng Pangako Education Plans na abot-kaya at Gold Education Plans na nagbibigay ng pinakamahusay na benepisyong pang-edukasyon, siguradong matutupad na ang pangarap mo para sa kanya.

Ang Philam Plans ay matatag ito ang may pinakamalaki at pinaka-liquid na trust fund sa lahat ng pre-need companies sa bansa. Ang Philam Plans ay affiliate ng Philamlife, ang nangungunang insurance company sa bansa at AIG, ang nangungunang international insurance and financial services organization sa buong mundo.

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**PHILAM PLANS**  
Kapaki, Kapatid, Kapatid sa Magandang Kinabukasan.

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Privatization and Management Office (PMO), through its Bids and Awards Committee (PMO-BAC), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor ("FA") in connection with the privatization of the 55% of the share of stock of Philippine Postal Corp. ("Philpost") under a success fee arrangement.

The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is FOUR MILLION PESOS (P 4M), to be paid by the PMO and chargeable against the success fee which shall not exceed 75% of the total sales proceeds from the privatization of the 55% shares of stock of Philpost. The fees for the FA shall be payable as follows:

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES	FEES
I-Valuation	Preparation of valuation and appraisal report, information memorandum and privatization plan	Not to exceed Four Million Pesos (P4M)
II-Implementation	Implementation of the privatization plan, as approved by the Privatization Council	Not to exceed 75% of the sales proceeds, less the fee paid for the Valuation Phase

2. The PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ("LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisor Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on or before 22 February 2006 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, by hand, to the Bids and Awards Committee, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St. Legaspi Village, Makati City and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of P5,000.00.

Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 27 February 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.

3. The PMO-BAC shall draw up the short list of FAs from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 ("RA 9184") and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A ("IRR-A"). The short list of prospective bidders shall not exceed five (5) FAs. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

- 30% — General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principal and key staff, including relevant experience of the principal and key staff from previous employment;
- 30% — Privatization experience of the FA;
- 20% — Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project;
- 20% — Dealings of the FA with the Philippine Government.

The passing rate to be eligible is 70%.

4. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, bidding for the hiring of an FA will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the PMO. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder, who was determined as such during post-qualification.

The PMO-BAC shall evaluate bids using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders to be obtained from the PMO.

5. Interested FAs may obtain the eligibility and short listing requirements, and the other bidding documents, from the PMO-BAC at the address given below from Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on 15 March 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/PMO-BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure, annul the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

**BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE  
PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE**  
4th Floor, 104 Gamboa Street,  
Legaspi Village, Makati City  
Tel. Nos. 893-1640 / 893-7096 / 817-1103  
Fax No. 893-2290  
Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

(Sgd.) CRISANTA S. LEGASPI  
Deputy Privatization Officer and  
Chairperson, PMO-BAC

(PD) February 13 & 20, 2006



# BUSINESSMonday

## Termite control business up

SENTRICON TERMITES Colony Elimination System posted a significant 15 percent growth in sales last year, according to Gladez Dao-Talavera, Sales Manager of Dow AgroSciences. The announcement was made during a recent annual meeting of the authorized operators of Sentri-con System.

The increase is especially noteworthy given that it was attained despite difficult economic condi-

tions and steady competition.

The company reported several contract renewals. Since it was introduced locally in 1999, more than 15,000 properties have been installed with Sentri-con.

The gathering, labeled "Fellowship of Winners," assembled the industry's most successful and reliable pest control companies. Dow Agro executives recognized the invaluable contribution of Sentri-con old-timers like Bio-Tech Environmental Services Phils. Inc.; Chemitron, Enterprises Inc.; Entom Pest Control and General Services Corp., No Ka Oi (Phils) International Inc.; Pest Away Corp.; Pestcon Pest Management and General Services Inc.; TopBest Pest Services Inc., and Virra Pest Inc.

Last year, Sentri-con forged a partnership with Alog & Company Inc. to make the revolutionary anti-termite treatment available to more home and property owners in the Philippines. Today, from a City Center, SM North has added two annex buildings and a car park building.

For more information, visit [www.sentri-con.com](http://www.sentri-con.com) or call 840-38-74; 819-19-86; 882-1767.

Republic of the Philippines

SENATE

Passay City

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Senate of the Philippines invites all G-EPIS registered bidders/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid on the printing and binding of "SENATE MEMORABILIA" with the following specifications:

DESCRIPTION	QTY	PROJECT ALLOCATION	NON-REFUNDABLE FEE/PROJECT
SENATE MEMORABILIA (13th Congress 2005-2006)	2,000 ops.	Php 1,600,000.00	Php 200.00
No. of Pages	201 including cover		
Size	9" x 12" (folded)		
Stock	80 lbs. Bookpaper coated both sides		
Binding	any-to-sewing, hardbound		
Cover	120 lbs. Board with printing on both cloth full color off set		
Process	20 days after receipt of CO-ROMS from the Senate Memo Project Committee		
Delivery			

The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidders/suppliers at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 401, 4/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City from 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM, February 27 to March 2 and March 6-8, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee as indicated above. Liquidated damages of Php 1,000.00 or 1/10 of one percent (1%) of the unperformed portion, whichever is higher for each day of delay shall be imposed on the printer for failure to deliver on said deadline. The pre-bidding conference shall be held on March 14, 2006, 10:00 AM at the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Administrative and Financial Services, Rm. 408, 4th Floor, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Pasay City.

All particulars relative to the eligibility bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

This invitation is also advertised with the Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPIS) at [www.procurement.gov.ph](http://www.procurement.gov.ph) and posted at the 4th Floor Senate bulletin board.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 562-8801 local 1802 (c/o Rose de Castro).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT THEY MAY INCUR IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS UNDERTAKING NOR DOES IT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) ATTY ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS  
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PD) - February 20 & 26, 2006



# HOW-TO ROADSHOW

# 5

## seminars for IT managers and owners of small and medium businesses.

## SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS

### BUILDING YOUR TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

**1** January 19, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm  
Discovery Suites,  
Ortigas Center, Pasig City  
Learn the basics for setting up your own information and communication infrastructure with minimum cost and maximum performance.

### KEEPING EVERYBODY CONNECTED

**2** February 7, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm  
Unit 1102, 88 Corporate Center,  
Valero Cor. Sedeño St.,  
Salcedo Village, Makati City  
Link your office PCs together, and keep in touch with your personnel all times.

### USING THE INTERNET TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

**3** February 22, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm  
Kalayaan Sunset Lounge  
Export Bank Plaza, 24F Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., cor. Don China Rocas Ave., Makati City  
Communicating over the internet, broadband and online tools, e-commerce opportunities, and what you need to get on the internet map.

PC Magazine reserves the right to screen the participants for each seminar. Selected participants shall be notified at least three days before the event and will receive a CONFIRMATION CODE. Only attendees with valid confirmation code shall be allowed to participate in any seminar. WALK-INS ARE NOT ALLOWED.

### FROM PAPER TO DIGITAL

**4** March 14, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm  
Reduce your paper costs, get rid of bulky records, manage all your data in a secure, off-site digital storage.

### BUILDING YOUR MOBILE OFFICE

**5** March 30, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm  
Discover how all the latest technologies to maximize the productivity of your sales and field personnel outside the office.

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this form to 759-2022 to 24  
or email details to  
[editors@pcmag.ph](mailto:editors@pcmag.ph)

Name

Age

Company

Address

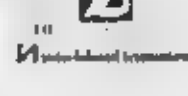
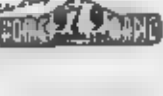
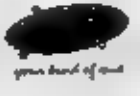
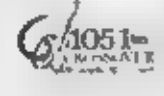
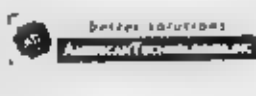
City

Position

Contact no.

E-mail Address

Nature of Business





## Internet fraud

MOVE OVER ENCYCLOPEDIAS, almanacs and other reference materials, the World Wide Web or Internet is now the preferred source of information for those who have access to this gizmo.

The wealth of knowledge available in cyberspace and the speed by which it can be secured have given this latest technology an aura of credibility and reliability.

This reputation has not escaped the attention of con artists who thrive on the gullibility or carelessness of some people in the handling of their money.

Boiler room operators, or people who sell worthless stocks or securities to the unwary and ignorant, have found in the Internet an effective medium to engage in their criminal activities.

For these modern day felons, telephone solicitations and flyers have outlived their usefulness. The "caller ID" mechanism has made tracking and barring nuisance telephone calls a lot easier.

Courier companies no longer accept anonymous requests for delivery of mail or packages. They now require their clients to present credible identification papers before they accept their orders.

## Solicitation

With the clever use of computer graphics, sounds and other forms of special effects, scam artists are able to catch the attention of Internet users to their illegal wares.

Getting the e-mail address of the potential victims is not a problem because the information is, for a few dollars, available right within the Web itself.

It also helps (that is, from the criminal's point of view) that there is no local or international regulatory system that monitors and enforces the proper use of cyberspace.

Internet users who get solicitations to buy securities or financial instruments issued by foreign and local companies should bear in mind that the fact that something is being promoted, sold or distributed through the Internet does not make it more legitimate than any other investments.

To make their pitch more convincing, the scam artists post supposedly recorded messages of well-known personalities, com-

## Corporate Securities Info

Raul J. Palabrica

plete with their smiling photos, telling how good the offered securities are and how much they've earned from investing in them.

## Persistence

Another persuasion device used is giving the toll-free number of a "financial counselor or advisor" whom the targeted person can talk to any time at his convenience to answer questions about those securities.

Woe to anyone who makes the mistake of dialing that number.

If he refuses to succumb to the solicitation, his e-mail address will be bombarded with spam (or unsolicited messages) and his telephone will get automatic pre-recorded and pre-recorded messages urging him to change his mind.

Worse, if the targeted prey disclosed his address, his mailbox will be filled with letters and flyers explaining the virtues of investing in the con artists' investment instruments.

With call centers operating all over the world, tracing the identity and location of the persistent solicitor would be an exercise in futility.

To avoid further aggravation, the victim is forced to change his e-mail address and telephone number. Then, he has to go through the tedious process of informing his relatives, friends and clients, if any, about his new numbers.

Caveat  
As in all kinds of frauds, the bad guys take advantage of the element of "greed" that is believed to underlie every human being.

The thought of earning lots of money, by way of high returns on investments, with the least effort has made some people susceptible to the machinations of these perpetrators of fraud.

Internet users who may accidentally find themselves in the radar screen of this latest edition of con artists should bear in mind the age-old dictum in investments: if it looks too good to be

true, it probably is.

Before replying to an e-mail solicitation or dialing the number of the suggested financial advisor, it is advisable to download the material first and show it to somebody who is knowledgeable about securities investments for his review.

If the latter does not find anything wrong with the scheme, fine, go ahead and invest. Otherwise, go back to your computer and delete that spam from your file.

Word of caution in case the investment is done by credit card: Once you disclose your credit card number, you open yourself to the possibility of its being "hijacked" by computer hackers who buy products through the Internet.

The Internet is a good source of information. But there is no stopping garbage from being uploaded to it and circulated to the unwary.

Caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware. (For feedback, please write to <rpalabrica@enquirer.com.ph>.)

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**Offer is valid from February 10 to March 31, 2006**

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Fax: (603) 7623 2888  
Email: eu-jin\_chong@symantec.com

\*\* Price stated includes 1 year Gold Maintenance and local taxes. Includes 1 year 24x7 extended support

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0937 Series of 2006

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**symantec.**

## Wedding symposium set

WEDDING GURU RITA NERI (OF THE WEDDING STORE) IS SET TO hold a wedding symposium on March 26, 2006, Sunday, at the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club in Makati.

Neri will conduct the one-day symposium together with the best of the wedding industry's suppliers. Subject matters ranging on how to choose the best suppliers for cakes, flowers, photography, attire, etc., will be discussed by noted experts in their field such as Rajo Laurel, Patrick Uy, Penk Chung, Jun Hen, Dominic Velasco, Noky Gatmaitan, Ed Pasamba.

Not designed as a typical bridal fair where interaction is limited and contrived, the symposium offers couples the unique experience of being able to interact and discuss with these resource speakers on any and all matters pertaining to preparations for their big day.

Registration is now ongoing. Interested couples can register by calling (632) 893-0534 / 840-1897 or via Email: theweddingstore@yahoo.com. Visit our website: www.theweddingstorema.com



Republic of the Philippines  
**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**  
Agham Road, Orlina, Quezon City

**BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS**  
In Compliance with RA 7041

## GENERAL SERVICES DIVISION

1. **ENGINEER III** - Item Nos. OMBA-ENG3-44-2004; OMBA-ENG3-45-2004, OMBA-ENG3-46-2004; SG 19 (3 Positions)  
Education: Bachelor's degree in Engineering relevant to the job;  
Experience: 2 years of relevant experience; Training: 8 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080

2. **ENGINEER IV** - Item No. OMBA-ENG4-43-2004; SG 22  
Education: Bachelor's degree in Engineering relevant to the job;  
Experience: 3 years of relevant experience; Training: 16 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

- 1) A letter stating the position applied for
- 2) Fully accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
- 3) 1"x1" (picture colored)
- 4) \*Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
- 5) \*Transcript of Records;
- 6) \*Certificates of Seminars/Training attended;
- 7) \*Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable)
- 8) \*Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
- 9) Statement duly signed by the applicants as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

\*Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies

(PDC February 20, 2006)

# BUSINESSMonday

## SM North Edsa: 'Corporate EDSA baby'

**E**DSA BABIES REFER TO CHILDREN born during or after the people's revolution that ousted Ferdinand Marcos as president of the Philippines.

"Corporate Edsa babies" are establishments that began operations in 1986. We look back at an establishment that opened its doors almost at the same time as the Edsa revolution, which hap-

pened 20 years ago.

SM North Edsa's City Center started operations in late 1985 amid all the political and economic uncertainties facing the country.

When tycoon Henry Sy bought a huge piece of grassland in Quezon City in the early 1980s and built a mall on it, people thought he had gone mad.

In a speech to members of the Management Association of the Philippines, Sy daughter, Tessie said:

"When we constructed our first mall in North-Edsa

in 1983, the Philippines was in the midst of a debt moratorium, drastic devaluation, and experiencing hyperinflation. The economy decline was further aggravated by the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.

Many bankers predicted our demise because Henry Sy came from nowhere. He may have had a few department stores and shoe stores, but he was not one of the financial heavyweights at that time.

Unaffected by criticism and armed with sheer determination and optimism, he persisted and opened

SM NORTH EDSA today (above) and when it opened (right).

in 1985 with our department store and supermarket and a few tenants."

Today, nobody can question Henry Sy's decision. From a City Center, SM North has added two annex buildings and a car park building.

"Mr. Henry Sy, Sr. already had a vision of how that area will develop in the future as the property location is right in front of Edsa, cuts through the intersections of West Avenue and Edsa and is very proximate to Caloocan, Fairview, Commonwealth, Diliman which were also starting to boom at that time. As envisioned by Mr. Sy, SM North Edsa started the "mall phenomenon" and by early 90s, management already completed the expansion by opening the SM Carpark Building and the SM Annex to accommodate a bigger market," says Jeffrey C. Lim, VP for Finance and Administration, SM Prime Holdings Inc. By Margie Quimpo-Espino

**EXPORTBANK**

**Deposito Mo, MILYON ang PANALO!**  
Raffle Promo



**1st Prize**

**P100,000**

From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Arleen Mejia, 1st Prize winner; and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.



From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Ray Mallari, and wife, Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize winner; Lament Acas, and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.



From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Desmond Stanley Chua, consolation prize winner, Metro Manila area; and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.

From left to right: Eddio Day, Exportbank Relationship Manager; Feliciano Person, Exportbank Region Head; Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Arleen Mejia, 1st Prize winner; Desmond Stanley Chua, consolation prize winner; Metro Manila area; Ray Mallari, and wife, Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize winner; Lament Acas, Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President; and Marcela A. Micales, Jr., Exportbank Executive Vice President.

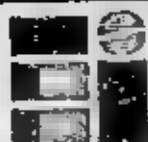
### List of winners:

Major prize: Arleen Mejia, 1st prize, Angeles City; Aileen Po, 2nd prize, Manila City; Metro Manila; Josefa Velasco Dropesa, 2nd prize, Cebu City; Song Bok Yan &/or Josefin Tsa, 2nd prize, Angeles City; Desmond Stanley Chua, 3rd prize, Manila City; Metro Manila; Jun Sang Shin, 3rd prize, Mandalay City; Cebu; Ray Mallari &/or Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize, Pangasinan; Consolation prize: Norelita Santos, Cagayan City; Romeo Salazar, Cebu City; Laguna; Jia Go Park, Angeles City; Danilo Deza, Jr., Cebu City; Petronilo Larrabaster &/or Mary Mae Sebastian/Jesus Sebastian, Davao City; Benardo Seima, Cebu City; Jane Alvaro Gelberg, Makati City; Metro Manila; Antonio Bayot or Antonio J. Bayot or Ma. Luisa Bayot, Muntinlupa City; Metro Manila; Ma. Asuncion Isidro or Maria Macabulos, Metro Manila; Raulito Magpantay, San Pedro, Laguna.

**CONGRATULATIONS to all the 2nd RAFFLE DRAW WINNERS!**

Exportbank held the 2nd Preliminary Draw of the "Deposito Mo P1-Million ang PANALO" Raffle promo Part 2 at the Exportbank Lower Lobby Hall, Exportbank Plaza last December 15, 2005. Cash prizes were given away to a total of seventeen lucky winning depositors from Luzon, Metro Manila and Visayas areas under the supervision of Mr. Ferdinand Manfeste, Assistant Regional Director for Department of Trade and Industry, National Capital Region.

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## Hotel weathers political and economic turmoil

By Germelina A. Lacorte  
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY - ON THE WALL OF MARCO Polo Davao's spacious lobby, near the elevator door opposite the ground floor check-in counter, are framed messages of three past and present presidents of the country.

"Gol Gol Gol" wrote former President Fidel V. Ramos in his trademark handwriting on April 27, 1998, when the 16-story hotel finally opened along Claveria St. here and claimed the title of being the city's tallest landmark.

Next to Ramos' handwriting, was another framed message written a year later.

"Here at last and happy!" wrote Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was at the hotel on Nov. 26, 1999.

"Nice to be back here!" she wrote again as president on Feb. 22, 2001, a few weeks after the revolt that forced Joseph Estrada out of office.

Former Cory Aquino drew a rose and affixed her signature on a piece of paper. It was dated, Feb. 23, 2001, a day after Arroyo's arrival.

Marco Polo Davao is the first hotel put up by the Hong Kong-based Marco Polo Group in the country through the Davao Halifax Hotel Inc.

It withstood recent political and economic storms, changes of administration and even the travel advisories issued against Mindanao in particular.

Opening a year after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the hotel continues to stand up against adverse developments like the twin bombings that rocked Davao in 2003 and the Valentine day bombing two years later.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) said Marco Polo has consistently posted the highest occupancy rate among the hotels of its type in the region.

"Despite its price and larger number of rooms to fill, Marco Polo continued to top in occupancy and average room rate," Art Boncato, Marco Polo sales and marketing director, says.

He adds the hotel has also been posting the highest yield—or income earned per room—in this part of the country.

Boncato says tourists come to the hotel because of the Marco Polo brand, which is known in Asia. Marco Polo has hotels in Hong Kong, China and Vietnam.

The claims of the Marco Polo officials have been found true by global research group Synovate.

During the last three quarters, Synovate collated data including customers' rating performance from the time of arrival at the hotel to the quality of room and services and report it as part of the in-house quarterly evaluation among the Marco Polo Group of Hotels.

The Synovate survey showed that Marco Polo Davao has consistently made it to the top.

Marco Polo Davao offers 245 rooms, suites and function rooms and other amenities.

On its top two floors, the Continental Club offers the most luxurious accommodations for business executives, offering additional hotel services and facilities with a private lounge.

"As Davao's tallest building, Marco Polo is one of the city's landmarks, a symbol of modern Davao," Boncato said.

According to Boncato, the hotel has been introducing new things to Davao city like the different food festivals it holds every year.

Currently it is hosting the two-week long Culinary Canadiana 2006, which opened last Feb. 9.



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# LIFESTYLE

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

## The untold story of 'Geisha'

With the lush adaptation of his best-selling debut novel taking its bow, Arthur Golden describes the odyssey from book to movie



GONG LI (foreground) as washout geisha Hatsumomo

By Ruel S. De Vera

IT IS AN ENDLESS CORRIDOR filled with the slither of silk kimonos and days unfolding like paper fans. "It is an exotic and intriguing world. It's quite beautiful to see," Arthur Golden writes. Though it would be easy to surmise that he is referring to the 1920s Kyoto inhabited by the geisha Sayuri in his novel, "Memoirs of a Geisha," he is actually swooning over the motion-picture adaptation by "Chicago" director Rob Marshall that stars Ziyi Zhang as Sayuri. He shares his excitement and reflects on the journey of "Geisha" from page to screen in this exclusive e-mail interview with the INQUIRER.

Originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Golden attended Harvard, where he studied art history, particularly Japanese art. He would go on to earn a Master's in Japanese History from Columbia. Golden explains that he does not possess a fascination for Japan more than he does for any other culture. "I began studying Japan in college originally because I was intrigued by the language," he says. "I'll admit that when I was 19 or 20, I went through a brief love affair with Japan, but since then I've been far more of a realist. There are things about Japan I love and things about it that drive me crazy. I would say the same about the United States."

After a brief sojourn in Beijing, Golden moved to Tokyo. There, he met a man whose mother had been a geisha, something he thought would make for a good book. That led to the idea of writing a novel and "Geisha" began to evolve, though the gestation process was most delicate. After three years, he had produced a 750-page draft derived mostly from what he had read in books.

### Interview with a geisha

Just as he was revising this massive draft, he got a call from a friend in Japan who found some geisha for Golden to interview. "As it turned out, the interviews I conducted with these geisha revolutionized my understand-

THE UNTOLD/C4



ZIYI ZHANG as Sayuri, the blue-eyed geisha

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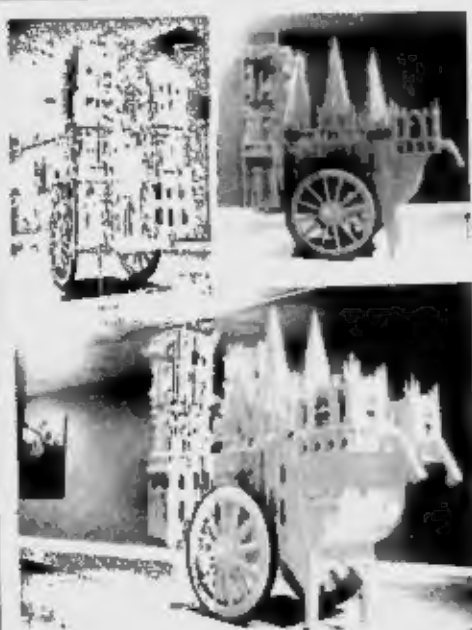
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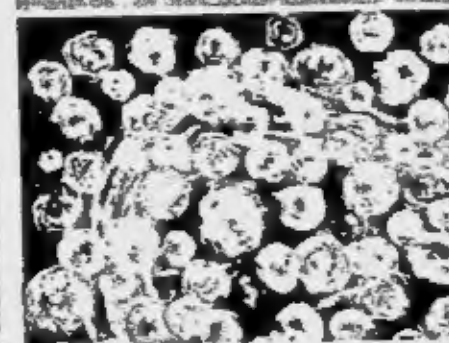




**JOSÉ TENCE RUIZ'S** retrospective, "BoDeGa (Bago't Dating Gawa)," will open on Feb. 24 at the SM Art Center (4/L SM Megamall). Presented by the Final Art File, the show covers 30 years of furious creativity in different media (oil and acrylic, ink on paper, sculpture, mixed media and digital format). Grounded by

social realism and nourished by self-reflexiveness, Ruiz's works involve a close examination of the world, initially implicating events which then evolve into a creative and critical observation of the self. His works show versatility, inventiveness and insight. "BoDeGa" runs until March 12. Call 6342411.

## Hiraya features Indonesia-based Modesto



**CLOCKWISE** from top left: "Solemn," "An Angel through the Window," "Flowers for Buddha," "Fish Eye"

**HIRAYA GALLERY** IS EXHIBITING "THE Mystical Planet of Modesto" featuring the impressionistic works of Fernando Modesto, a Filipino expatriate whose paintings have been featured in major art museums and private collections in Asia and Europe.

Based in Indonesia for almost two decades now, Modesto presents his self-styled religious and scientific thesis. Every creation or its perceived reality possesses a harmonious coexistence of two forces. The planet Earth is surrounded by heaven, the sea mirrors the sky, men have guardian angels and soul mates, light flashes out from darkness, balls rest in twos. Modesto calls the forces the bipolar states of reality.

He enshrines his subject through this thesis. "The Angel Peeping through the Window" shows two worlds: heaven with a huge window and a giant angel looking out to the affairs of men. "The X and Y Universe" divides the galaxy with an angel walking across a flat table where planets rest.

Modesto draws this idea of an imagined world that floats in a large ethereal space where angels romp and play. He rears his faith that within this enclosing space, chaos and control coexist.

Modesto works with oil, a wieldy medium yet perfect for an impressionist artist like him. "My paintings are a riot of colors," he says. Lemon-yellow lights up his canvases while green soothes his eyes.

"The Mystical Planet of Modesto" runs until March 15. Call 5233331.

## VISUAL ARTS



**PACHECO** in front of "The Wedding at Cana"

**Religious paintings by Pacheco**  
THE AUGUSTINIAN Contemplative Nuns of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, and the Italian Federation of the Augustinian Monasteries of Italy will present a series of paintings on the life of St. Augustine by noted finger-painting expert Rafael Pacheco of Morong, Rizal, on Feb. 28. The paintings will be on display at the church of the Augustinian Monastery of the Mother of Good Counsel, at Carmel Farms, Purok 8, Barrio Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

### Alvarado at Joaquin

**BACOLOD-BASED** social realist Nunulucio Alvarado is featured in "Palangga" (Loved One) at the Centre Gallery of Joaquin Main (371 P. Guevarra St. corner Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan; tel. 7239253 or 7239418; www.galeriajoaquin.com).

The show opens on Feb. 22 and features 23 romantic paintings but still depicting figures of the peasantry with squat broad mass and angular faces, Alvarado's staples. Their wide-open eyes stare intently at viewers.



**"FATHER and Child II"**



**"OBJECT of Pleasure 5"**

### Children's art contest

THE UNITED Nations Environment Programme is holding the World Environment Day children's art contest. Entries should be by children 6-14 years old. The seven winners will get a fully sponsored trip to the World Environment Day celebrations in Algiers, Algeria, on June 5, plus cash. Theme is deserts and desertification. Paintings must be done on either A4 or A3 paper; mediums are crayons, colored pencils or watercolor.

Entries can be submitted via e-mail (scanned or regular mail) to the Unep office in Bangkok (sarbuddhi@un.org). Deadline is Feb. 28. View www.unep.org/tunza/paint-comp15.



**"FLOWER Arrangements Against Yellow Wall"**



**JULIUS Limpe with his painting "Mother and Child on the Terrace"**

### Limpe's zodiac art

**JULIUS Limpe** is holding his 13th solo exhibit, "From Rooster to Dog, Year 2008," at Gallery 828 in Shangri-La Plaza Mall. The fearlessly unconventional expressionist painter has mounted a collection of colorful and truly auspicious paintings of dogs, roosters, Mother and Child, a panda bear, waterfalls, and the perennial artist's favorites—fish and flowers. Dogs are shown embracing each other with affection, roosters crouching on the alert for predators, waterfalls gushing forth with intense power.

### Bencab et al. at Crucible

**BEN CABRERA**, Dan Dizon and Romi Mananquil present a group exhibit at the Crucible Gallery, 4/F, Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, until March 5. Call 8356061.

### 3 artists at Avellana

**OPENING** today at the Avellana Art Gallery are three simultaneous exhibits. Florancio B. Concepcion's "Once upon a Time" features snapshot sketches—characterized by fast and

lurid strokes—of a nude voluptuary; Lexygius Galip constructs and explores the nature of the abyss in "Beyond Words"; while Ferdinand Cacio's "In High Spirits" presents a flurry of svelt, balletic dancers in brass poised for flight or weightlessness. Avellana Art Gallery is at A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City (fronting Gideon Academy). Call 8338357.

### Santos at West Gallery

**STEVE Santos** will hold "Recent Works," Feb. 23-March 7, at West Gallery, 4/L, Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. A total of 18 paintings in black ink and watercolor will be presented in the exhibit. Call 6341284.

### Del Rosario at Nine, Big

**FARLEY del Rosario's** new series of darling round-eyed, long-nosed, curlicue-armed boys and girls, which have earned praise from critics and collectors, is on display at Gallery Nine (Megamall, 8877302) and Gallery Big (Makati, 8954518). Del Rosario lends a child's wonder raptures with contrasts in line and color, giving a charming twist to romantic themes.



**"ANGELS We Have Heard on High"**

## Velasco's women, Ortega's bucolics

By Gino Dormiendo  
Contributor

**THE LATE-BLOOMING** LYDIA VELASCO continues to astonish. Her prodigious output in recent years, predominantly paintings of women in various configurations, radiates a raw energy emanating from the center of a bold expressionist imagination totally enamored with the subject of female sensuality.

In her latest solo show, "La Danse," (G/L, Gallery Joaquin, until Feb. 21), the quantity is a feat difficult to duplicate, considering the artist's advancing age and markedly debilitating health.

With over 30 works on display, obviously timed to coincide with the opening of the gallery's newly acquired and tastefully refurbished ground level, Velasco has both her old works and new, as proof of the artist's continuing evolution.

A virtual latecomer to the art scene, she had taken up painting to keep her occupied after her retirement. A decision she hasn't regretted

as she is now besieged by collectors and gallery owners alike. (There are, to date, a dozen works that have been sold to foreign buyers, which confirms her inclusion at the Sotheby's auction in Singapore this April is no fluke.)

Part of Velasco's enduring charm can be attributed to her innate ability to render the female figure as the embodiment of the woman in her various guises and disguises, though the facial features betray a Southeast Asian countenance.

Initially perplexing even to the trained eye, the subjects seem to be the composite of East and West, traditional and modern in dress and demeanor, and yet finally emerging a character all her own, with all her vital attributes intact—bosomy chest, broad-shouldered physique and a countenance that is nothing short of alluring, seductive.

This posits a Jungian message of dual persona—half-Eros and half-Madonna—one part is the basic human lot, essential in a gender relationship, and the other a spiritual figure that licenses women to seek affirmation of their role as provider and nurturer of life.

### Ortega's sculptures

A debuting artist in sculpture has likewise surmounted the overwhelming obstacles posed by his chosen medium, presumably the most difficult to manipulate and control simply because of the attendant risks and dangers involved.

With brass, Carlito Ortega has found a material worthy of his great expectations, even if he had to labor in his studio to learn the rudiments of cutting brass sheets, firing them to fit desired characters, and firing acrylene to give his figures a life of their own.

All these he learned via the school of hard knocks, or, more aptly, the hardy blows from his torch-machine.

A native of Maramag, Bukidnon, where he grew up in the late '60s, when the terrain was still untouched by migrants and landlords, Ortega later went to Cebu for his studies. In time, he found himself being transplanted to San Pablo, Laguna, where he finally settled to raise a family. It is on this sprawling 1½-hectare lot that he built his studio-workshop, far removed from the encumbrances of modern living.

It is while deep-neck doing brass sculptures that Ortega finally met fashion designer Patris Tesoro, who urged him to exhibit his works in



**"MARIAN II,"** by Lydia Velasco

her restaurant. To his amazement, buyers came and bought all the pieces on display.

And when Araceli "Chichi" Salas checked the works, she too was pleasantly surprised at her discovery. The budding artist was now ready for a solo show.

The show, "Hubog sa Apoy" (Gallery Genesis, until Feb. 21) assembles Ortega's favorite characters from his long sojourn in Bukidnon: the peasant aloft on his carabao, the pristine landscape of memory where he waded his young feet, the young boy in slumber dreaming of distant places, and many others permanently lodged in his imagination.

Hewn in brass, the pieces have a solid, sturdy, indeed, robust quality to them emanating from the artist's direct encounter with the medium and enhanced by his native facility with the shapes and nuances of rural life he had experienced.

Both man and beast are, in many works, depicted in friendly matches of strength, speed and stamina, not to mention the youthful daring on the part of the human character to tame the animal. On occasion, as in "Nangangarap," the youthful dreaming reprises Don Quixote's fight with the windmills.

Indeed, in a young mind's universe, the quixotical battle looms large and menacing, firing up Ortega's brave new world of precocious adventures and misadventures.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



**"NASAAN ni Kalakihan,"** by Carlito Ortega



# Macau's heritage surprise



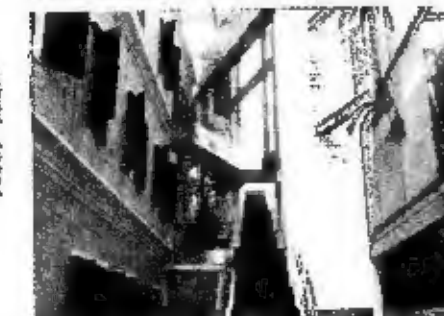
**PATTERNED** paving differentiates streets and sidewalks within the core historic area from the rest of the city.



**OLD** and new exist side by side in total compatibility without one architectural style grabbing attention from the other.



**ART Deco** building from the 1930s shows how styles and eras juxtapose harmoniously as architectures of different periods were constructed in the city center.



**MODERN** addition by architect Cheong Cheong Kio shows how old and new are compatible.



**COLORFUL** park gate reminds of Macau's colonial background.



**HISTORIC** Largo Leal Senado with restored buildings and distinctive paving is where the pulse of Macau is found.

**M**ACAU COMPLETELY SURPRISED a group of architects and student-members of the United Architects of the Philippines-Makati Chapter who went on an architectural-heritage tour to the multicultural city.

Approaching the city on the drive from the airport, casino structures immediately grab attention. Huge structures compete for patrons, lighting up streets at night to daytime brightness with immense Las Vegas-style signage. Macau is, after all, among the gambling capitals of Asia and many Las Vegas casinos are setting up shop there.

The big surprise is that the glitz of Macau casinos does not outshine the charm of the city, a juxtaposition of Chinese and Portuguese colonial structures that follow the rolling of the hills in the city, whose narrow streets once opened out to promenaded shoreline boulevards. Reclamation has landlocked the former seaside boulevards as new land pushes the existing shoreline farther and farther away.

Macau is a small peninsula that includes two islands totaling 25.8 sq km, jutting off the China coast which has tripled from its original size through a constant reclamation program.

On reclaimed land rise dazzling new structures, the airport, a view tower, more casinos, convention centers, sports complexes, apartment blocks. New large-scale construction is restricted to reclaimed areas, a remarkable move that diverts development pressure from the preserved historic center of Macau that is protected from destruction by well-managed legislation.

What sets Macau apart from all other cities in the region is its five-century-long interaction between East and West which began with Macau's colonization by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The dialogue continues today despite the former colony's reversion to China.

## Unique

The fusion of cultures developed a unique Macanese image and lifestyle, recognized by Unesco through its 2005 inscription of the Historic Center of Macau on the World Heritage List that cited:

"The Historic Center of Macau includes the oldest Western architectural heritage on Chinese soil today. Together with Macau's traditional Chinese architecture, it stands witness to successful East-West cultural pluralism and architectural traditions."

"The Historic Center of Macau is the product of East-West cultural exchange, constituting the most unique blend of cultural heritage existing in China's historic cities... a complete social infrastructure that has encompassed and sustained the living traditions of different cultures."

In multicultural Macau, official languages are Chinese and Portuguese. Of its 450,000 residents, 95 percent are Chinese. Only 5 percent are of Portuguese or European origins. Classical Cantonese, traditional Portuguese, and fusion Chinese-Portuguese-Macanese are the local cuisines served at tables.

Its religions are Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and Roman Catholic. Temples stand side by side with colonial churches while Macanese regularly join each other's religious festivals.

Within the protected World Heritage area in the city center is a core zone containing a collection of over 20 individual World Heritage monuments linked by a walking path distinctively paved in cream and black stone cobbles set in a

striking wave pattern.

Follow the path through the city to get to each of the World Heritage monuments which include colonial architecture (ruins, fortifications, religious buildings, civic buildings, open plazas), Chinese heritage (temples, shops, houses), cemeteries, public gardens, turn-of-the-century architecture.

## Long walk

Early on a Sunday morning, the UAP Makati architects walked the cobbled path, wended through narrow streets, then up and down hills, and ended with tired feet in the late afternoon at the shoreline promenade in front of A-Ma Temple, which legend says existed before Macau came into being.

The architects started out by climbing to the hilltop Macau Museum, built into the ruins of Macau Fort next to the iconic ruins of St. Paul's Church, where Alorino Noriega, public relations officer of the Macau Government Tourism Office, joined them to provide information on the historical background of Macau.

Cheong Cheong Kio, heads of the Cultural Heritage Department of the Macau Cultural Institute, and his colleague Angie Wong, led the UAP delegation through the stunning historic center impeccably restored by their institute.

The Cultural Institute has successfully restored the colonial Leal Senado building, still used as the city's Municipal Chamber building, retaining the old meeting room, elaborate library and garden.

Also restored were surviving parts of the old city walls, Catholic churches from the colonial era, temples, Chinese houses now converted into museums, and an outstanding series of open



**ON TAIPA** Island is a secluded beach promenade, a rare image of old Macau.

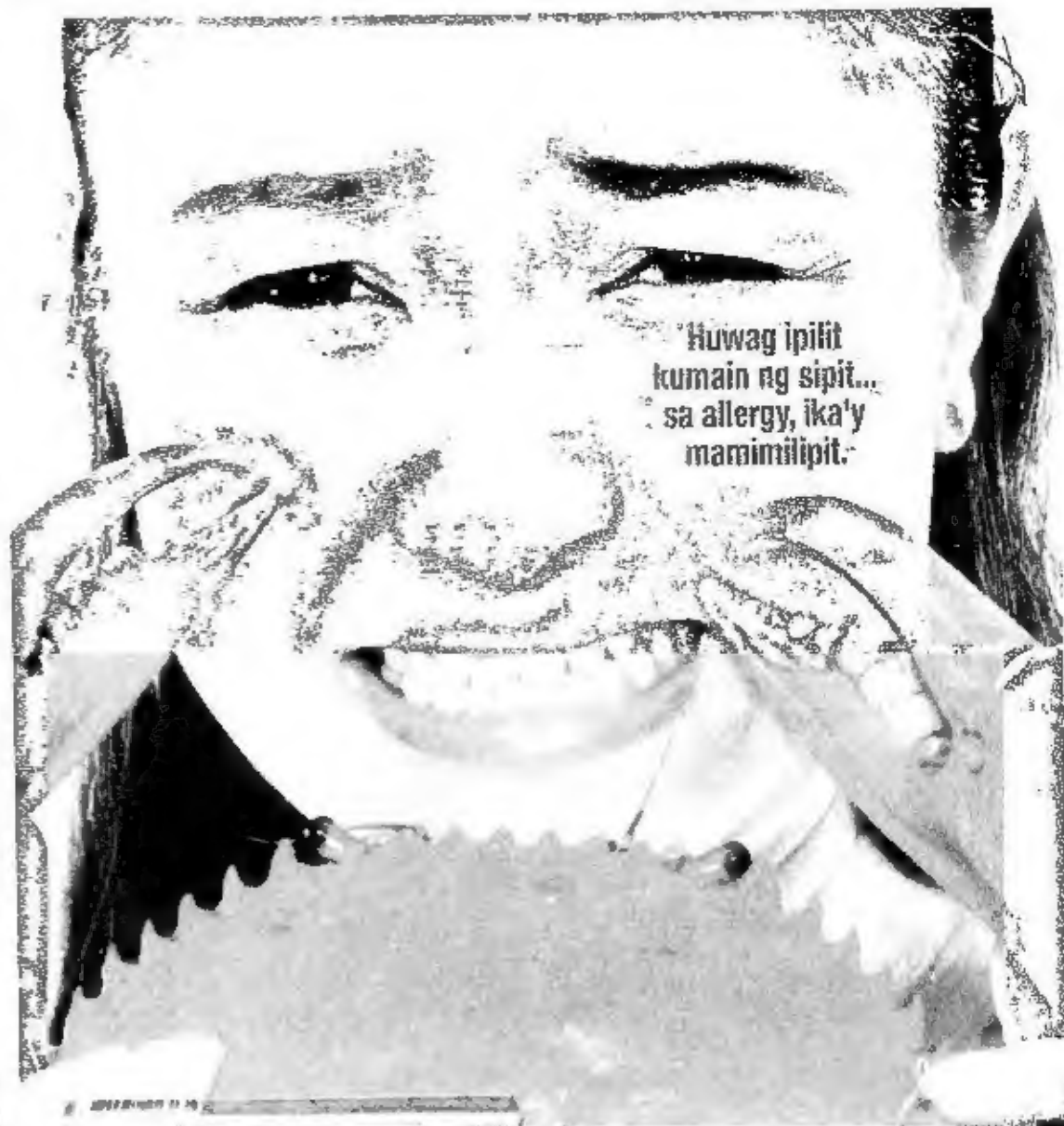
public spaces that green the congested city center.

The UAP architects were taken to a job site to observe restoration work in progress, introducing non-restoration architects to the time-consuming complexity of restoring an old structure by using original construction techniques and authentic materials.

Macau went beyond providing the UAP group a heritage tour. It charmed everyone and brought back great memories and first-hand experience of how the modern and historic worlds blended perfectly, enhancing contemporary lifestyle and giving an identity to Macau that sets it apart from all other cities in the world.

The Macau Government Tourism Office provides visitor information for Macau (tel. 8139047). G&S Travel provides air and land arrangements (tel. 6360895 or 6332407).

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# The untold story of 'Geisha'

From page C1

ing of the geisha world so completely, I came home and threw away my entire first draft and started over," he says. Emerging from this rebirth was the story of Chiyo, the girl with blue-gray eyes, who would come of age as Sayuri.

It would take three more years before the book's second incarnation would emerge. But the publishers found the manuscript quite dull. "Naturally, I'd felt intimidated at the thought of impersonating a geisha, and I'd chosen to remain on safe terrain by writing a novel narrated in the third person. What was more, I'd conceived of the novel as focusing on five years in the life of an adult geisha shortly after World War II, even though most of the drama in her life—I now realized—would have been in her childhood. In the end, I threw away this second draft and started yet again."

It took six years, but he finally finished the novel, his first, in 1994. "Memoirs of a Geisha" came out in 1997. Like the stirring of the shamisen's strings, the novel's music enchanted audiences with its bold beauty, selling millions and being translated into over 30 different languages. "Quite astonishing! I can't think of a better answer than that. Even now, eight years after the novel first came out, it all seems a little surreal to me."

When work on transforming his novel into a movie began, Golden made suggestions on the screenplay by Robin Swicord. "I also steered the producers to a woman named Liza Dalby, the only non-Japanese ever to become a geisha," he adds, "and suggested they hire her as a consultant, which they did."

The cast, including Ken Watanabe (Chairman), Michelle Yeoh (Mameha) and Gong Li (Hatsumomo), were excellent, he says. "I'm pleased that the book is now known to a



KEN Watanabe (right) plays the Chairman

wider audience than before," Golden says of the movie's impending opening. "And watching the production as it moved along has proven to be quite an education. It was fun, too, to meet so many talented people and watch them as they worked."

## Controversial

While "Geisha" beguiled international readers, it has not been free of controversy. First came a former geisha claiming that the character Sayuri was actually her, an allegation Golden denies: "The idea that the book is based on the life of an actual woman strikes me as puzzling. Real life doesn't imitate fic-



NOVELIST Arthur Golden

tion; it isn't so neat or clear. Anyone who looks closely at the various contrivances in the book—most of which I went to considerable trouble to keep hidden—will see clearly that the character is an invention."

More recently, there has been a furor over Chinese actors playing Japanese parts. "I'm not sure what the controversy is about," he states. "Hugh Grant, an Englishman, plays Americans all the time. Russell Crowe, an Australian, plays Englishmen. Why is it any different if a Chinese portrays a Japanese, or vice versa? The only important question is: was the portrayal convincing?"

Even as he observes the movie's opening on screens worldwide, Golden, who lives in Massachusetts with wife Trudy and two children, is now finishing his next book, "about a young man who starts off in Amsterdam during the 1850s and 1860s, comes to the US at the age of 17, and ends up a very successful businessman. It's quite a different novel from 'Memoirs of a Geisha,' but told in a similarly intimate first-person voice."

A capacity for beauty amid adversity and a deep devotion to the past: this is why the geisha endure. "Nowadays geisha are something of an anachronism, of course. They continue to exist mainly because wealthy Japanese—just like the wealthy anywhere—still appreciate old-world customs," he explains. It is like remembering blossoms in a wasteland, and a quality that, in "Memoirs of a Geisha," Arthur Golden never forgot: "Geisha seem so mysterious to non-Japanese, I think, partly because there are few things like them outside Japan."



MICHELLE Yeoh plays Mameha, the geisha mentor

Columbia Pictures' "Memoirs of a Geisha" opens in Metro Manila theaters on Feb. 22.

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## Trumpets launches Musicademy

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHING Playshop as the leading multimedia summer workshop in the country today, Trumpets now launches an exciting new concept for auxiliary education—a year-round music, language and speech school called Musicademy, with Asia's pop idol, Christian Bautista, as endorser.

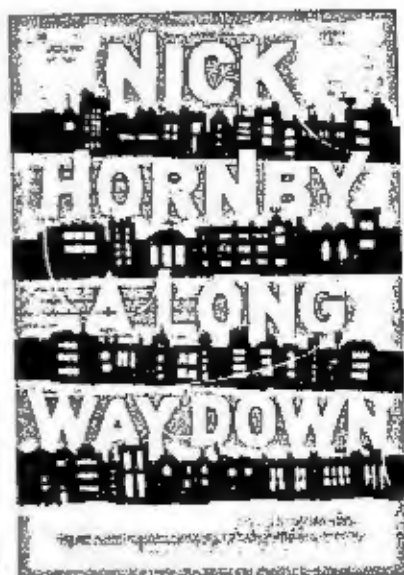
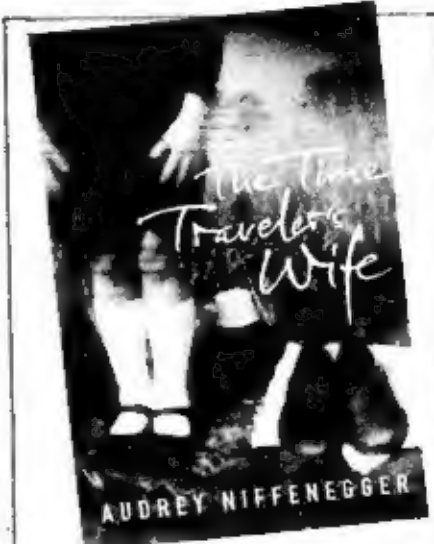
Maximize learning and growth with Musicademy's personalized programs where you can choose your own courses, schedules and one-on-one training.

Among the courses to choose from are fundamental vocal techniques, singing styles (Broadway, classical, pop, R&B and rock), competitive singing and song interpretation. Also, learn how to play musical instruments with lessons in piano, guitar, violin, flute and more.

Speech courses include basic speech techniques, confidence building, hosting and presentation skills. Learn French, Spanish, Nihongo, Mandarin or simply improve your English and impress people with your multilingual abilities.

Musicademy is located at the 5/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Call 6362842.

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## Book club tackles Hornby, Niffenegger novels

THE POWER BOOK CLUB TACKLES two thought-provoking novels, "A Long Way Down" and "The Time Traveler's Wife," by best-selling authors Nick Hornby and Audrey Niffenegger, respectively, at PowerBooks Greenbelt and Megamall.

Hornby's "A Long Way Down" delves deep into the psyches and hearts of four lost souls who connect just when they think they've reached the end of the line. Martin, JJ, Jess and Maureen are four strangers who meet on the roof of a London destination famous for being the last stop for people who want to end their lives.

"The Time Traveler's Wife" by the critically acclaimed Niffenegger is a hip, urban love story that unravels a bizarre flaw in the life of an otherwise normal couple.

"A Long Way Down" will be discussed on Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenbelt. "The Time Traveler's Wife" will be discussed on Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Megamall.

As a special treat, the first eight Powercard holders who are not yet Book Club members, get the featured book for free.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/5243448).

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**Sarap Pinoy MEALS**

**Goldilocks**

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**Goldilocks**

## 40 years of capturing the true Filipino Taste

Goldilocks in the Philippines is not just a fairytale character; it is a storied Pinoy icon deeply ingrained in the Filipino psyche. Now celebrating its fourth decade, it has built up a store of food memories, and every family has a favorite Goldilocks story to tell. From children today to their parents who grew up with Goldilocks—even to the grandparents who were there from the start—Goldilocks crosses generations.

Apart from an uncompromising commitment to total customer satisfaction, Goldilocks continues to develop new products and innovations, keeping it at the forefront of the industry. From an initial offering of rolls, chiffon slices, and pastries, the country's number one bakery pioneered the concept of the "celebration cake," which includes toys or figures as part of the decoration. Equipped with the same dedication and superior standards, Goldilocks then moved on to full meal and merienda choices via its food shop operations.

"We have an incredible synergy between our bakery and food shop menu," said Maie Tamsi, Goldilocks Marketing Manager for Foodshop Operations. "A Filipino can have the same affinity and longing for a Goldilocks merienda as they do for our panipit, palabok, lumpiang shanghai, or barbecue," she added. "These dishes go beyond taste—they evoke good memories, celebrations, and the uniqueness of Pinoy life." Ms. Tamsi further enthused.

Precisely because of this viewpoint, most Filipinos consider Goldilocks not only as a brand, but a Filipino institution. In order to better reflect this transcendence, their popular tagline "How thoughtful, how Goldilocks" actually evolved to "How thoughtful, how Pinoy." This new tagline embraces the tradition that goes beyond Goldilocks, yet keeps in mind the fact that Goldilocks is indeed Pinoy.

"We treasure the strong bond between Goldilocks and the Filipino, so we make it a priority to uphold and nurture it," continued Ms. Tamsi. "Our SarapPinoy meals, for example, combines the fondness for traditional Filipino dishes with value-for-money," she explained. SarapPinoy includes such favorites as laing, pork barbecue, and dinuguan at puto, bundled into affordable and delicious meal combos.

"With each Goldilocks SarapPinoy meal you enjoy, you are not merely getting a scrumptious dish—you get a taste of something truly Pinoy," Ms. Tamsi concluded.

ADPT